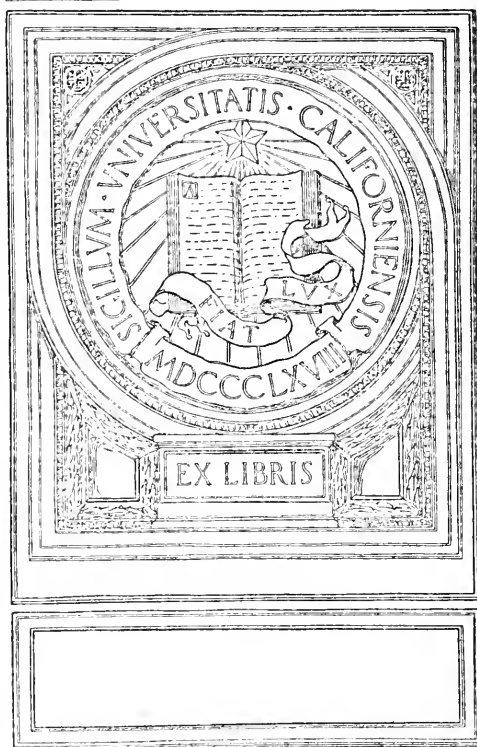


**A**  
**A**  
0  
0  
0  
5  
3  
0  
4  
2  
1  
7



UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AT LOS ANGELES







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation



# The Language of Richard Wagner's Ring des Nibelungen

BY

JOHN SCHULER

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DECREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, IN THE FACULTY OF  
PHILOSOPHY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

LANCASTER, PA.  
STEINMAN & FOLTZ,  
1909

ADDITIONAL TO VINO  
YOUNG'S BERRY CO. PA



1110  
4-10  
W1853

## PREFACE

The "Ring des Nibelungen" is not considered in this monograph from the viewpoint of the musical critic. Music is a field in which the author has no special training. It is well to state this at the very beginning. The "Ring des Nibelungen," however, is a great literary production. To show its place in the development of German libretti, and to point out its most prominent linguistic features, is the object of this work. This task has not yet been done in a satisfactory manner. Wagner's greatest work has only too often been laid aside with a shrug or a sneer, prompted, perhaps, by the storm of adverse criticism and ridicule which arose soon after it was published. That this assumed formidable dimensions is shown by Tappert's pamphlet entitled "Wagner-Lexikon" (1877), in which the author has collected newspaper and other comments on Wagner and his works. The "Ring" was called "Alliterationsgestotter, Casserolengerassel, Knueppeldamm," and many insulting epithets of a personal and opprobrious nature were hurled at the Poet-musician. Two essays against Wagner, one by Dr. W. Luebke (1869), the other by Eduard Hanslick, were published in one pamphlet with the following preface: "Richard Wagner hat es unternommen, um seiner Eitelkeit willen, den Tempel der Humanitaet zusehaenden und um kuenstlerische Unfaehigkeit zu beschoenigen, die Gesetze der Kunst aufzuloesen." Dr. W. Mohr in a little book entitled "Richard Wagner und das Kunstwerk der Zukunft," Koeln, 1876, speaks of Wagner's alliteration and underscores one passage in the following manner.:

O heilige Goetter, hehre Geschlechter,  
Weidet eu'r Aug' an dem weihvollen Paar.  
Getrennt—wer mag es scheiden,  
Geshieden—trennt es sich nie.

This shows that he knew absolutely nothing of the laws of alliteration, nevertheless he thought it witty, no doubt, to exclaim: "Strabreim dich oder ich fress dich."

Alexander Mozkowski wrote several long pieces of doggerel, no date, satirizing the "Ring" in the Berlin dialect; and Ludwig Brechter wrote "D'r Hannes vun Boehl in de erschte Mannemer Niewelunge-Uffihrunge vun Richard Wagner, e vier Owend langes Kunschtplaessir in zarde paelzer Reiml'cher g'fasst," which is innocent enough in its way, but ridicule, after all, is at the bottom of it. To give a full history of adverse criticism of Wagner would fill a small volume. The storm, however, has subsided, and the time has come when it is possible to give an unprejudiced account of Wagner's art-ideals and their realization.

Wagner in the "Ring" has been defended, of course, from the beginning, but the defence, so far as the author is able to see, has been pursued only along general lines. The task of connecting the "Ring" with other works has hardly been attempted, and little evidence has been drawn from Wagner's sources.

Hans von Wolzogen published, in 1878, a monograph on Wagner's poetic language which, for the time being, rendered valuable service; it is, however, incomplete, and not always in accordance with fact, since he starts out with the unfortunate proposition that Wagner was a creator of language, which he surely was not. The present work endeavors to give results that were gained by a close comparison of the "Ring" with its sources.

The author is free to admit that for the introduction he was compelled to rely on facts published elsewhere. Historians of music have carefully gone over that part of the field, for which no claim to original work other than that of proportion is made.

The monograph is the outcome of a paper written for the Germanic Seminar at Columbia University. It owes its completion to the untiring interest which Professor William H. Carpenter has evinced in many ways, and the author takes this opportunity to thank him most heartily for his assistance and encouragement.

# CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

THE GERMAN LIBRETTO PRIOR TO WAGNER.....	9
--	---

## CHAPTER I

GENESIS AND CONCEPTION OF THE "RING".....	25
---	----

## CHAPTER II

ALLITERATION .....	45
--------------------	----

Remarks by the critics. Wagner's sources with special reference to Ettmueller's translation of the Edda. Analysis of various types of alliteration in the "Ring." Proximate position. Approximate position.

## CHAPTER III

### THE VOCABULARY

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS .....	64
I. ANALOGIES WITH THE TRANSLATORS.....	66
1. Simrock's Translation of the Edda.....	67
2. Von der Hagen's Translation of the Voelsunga-Saga.....	70
3. Fouqué, Sigurd der Schlangentoeter.....	75
II. USE AND MEANING OF WORDS.....	76
1. Middle High German Words.....	76
2. Unusual Words.....	86
III. THE VERBAL PREFIX .....	89
1. The Prefix Dropped.....	90
2. The Prefix Used .....	91
IV. STYLISTIC OBSERVATIONS .....	92
1. Wagnerian Idioms .....	92
2. Annomination .....	93
3. Play Upon Words.....	94
4. Favorite Forms.....	94
5. Compound Substantives .....	94
6. Invectives.....	95
7. Metaphor and Personification of the Brute and Inanimate World .....	95



## ABBREVIATIONS

Wagner's drama is referred to as "Ring," "The Ring."

R—Rheingold.

W—Walkuere.

S—Siegfried.

G—Goetterdaemmerung.

Other abbreviations are explained in the text.

The references are to pages of Dr. Julius Burghold's edition: *Der Ring des Niebelungen*, Mainz, Verlag von B. Schott's Soehne, no date.



## INTRODUCTION

### THE GERMAN LIBRETTO PRIOR TO WAGNER

IN order to gain an adequate appreciation of Richard Wagner's art-ideals from a linguistic and literary point of view, it is necessary to glance at what existed before him. Though the Germans have contributed vastly to the modern opera, they did not create it; that honor belongs to the Italians alone. Its beginning in Germany was modest, though royal, since at first it was only a court luxury. Setting aside as irrelevant to our subject the *Singspiele* of Jakob Ayrer, published, together with his works, in 1618, it may be noted that the first so-called German opera was sung in 1627. This was a translation by Martin Opitz, of Rinuccini's libretto "*Dafne*."<sup>1</sup> In a short preface, Opitz excuses himself for having undertaken the task. The dedication follows, written in Alexandrine verse, and addressed to the royal pair for whose wedding celebration it was written. This is followed by the piece proper, in which choruses of shepherds and nymphs alternate with the songs of the principal *dramatis personæ*, such as Daphne, Apollo, Venus and Cupid. Though the piece is divided into five acts, the whole contains only about 550 lines; the meter changes often from iambic to trochaic movement; the language is very verbose and artificial. Frequently two or three lines of description must be read before the reader has the conception which the simple word "Sun," "Venus," or the like, would have readily conveyed.

"Daphne" had no direct influence upon the subsequent development of the opera, though it must be considered as something new in German literature. Some years later, Opitz wrote another libretto, "*Judith*." It differs only slightly from the first, and may be dismissed here without any further consideration. In

---

<sup>1</sup> M. Opitz, *Geistliche und Weltliche Poemata*, 1611.

1644, seventeen years after Opitz's "Daphne," the first real German Singspiel was made public. The text was written by Harsdoerffer, of Nuremberg, the music by Siegmund Gottlieb Staden, organist of the Sebaldus church at the same place. It bears the title: "Geistliches Waldgedicht, oder Freudenspiel Seelewig." The author thus justifies his work: "Etliche nennen diese Art Strafspiele (Satyrika), wann nehmlich allerhand Wald und Berggeister eingefuehrt, spielweis allerley Laster bestrafen. Weil aber diese meine Arbeit nicht von thoerichten Liebesfanzen handelt, als habe ich es ueberschrieben 'Ein geistliches Waldgedicht' und vermeine darinnen vorzustellen, wie der boese Feind den frommen Seelen auf allerley Weise nachtrachtet, und wie selbige wiederum von dem Gewissen und dem Verstand durch Gottes Wort vom ewigen Unheil abgehalten werden. Dementsprechend ist der Name 'Seelewig' gewaehlt, verstehend die ewige Seele."<sup>1</sup> This intention was made good by the author. His chief aim was not art, but utilitarian Christian morals. Harsdoerffer was not the man to lead along new paths. His text closely follows Italian models; the actors are shepherds, shepherdesses and nymphs, including a satyr, or forest spirit, and a matron.

During the unhappy political condition in Germany at this time, no great development in this direction could reasonably be expected, but there was still a place where conditions were congenial. This was Hamburg. By reason of its geographical position, this city was not touched so severely by the Thirty Years' War, and it presently became the Mecca of musicians. Music had been fostered here for years, and public performances and private concerts were given which had created an interest in this art among the citizens, whatever their social station. Elsewhere the opera existed only through the aid and protection of royalty; here it could flourish without royal favor, and did so as early as 1658. This flourishing condition of the opera was enhanced by the fact that there was no lack of talent of a certain kind, either in a literary or musical direction. The opposition of the clergy was overcome by the promise that, in the case of biblical productions, nothing should offend; the promot-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Langhans, *Geshichte der Musik*, i., 408.



ers pledged themselves to put all productions before a censorship, to keep the theatres closed on the Sabbath and on Feast-days, and to give a part of the receipts to the poor. All this looks very well on paper, and things went smoothly for a while, but gradually the promise was broken. As early as 1679 *Harlekin* was introduced to make things more interesting.<sup>1</sup> In a libretto of unknown origin, entitled "*Die Makkabaeische Mutter und ihre sieben Soehne*," an apostate Jew feasts on stolen pork and sausage, singing:

Sa, lustig gefressen und tapfer gesoffen,  
So lange die schleckische Gurgel steht offen.  
Bei niedlichen Wuersten da kommt es ans Duersten,  
Bei koestlichen Schinken da schmecket das Trinken;  
Erfreut euch ihr Brueder, wir habens getroffen,  
Sa, lustig gefressen und tapfer gesoffen."

By 1681 banality had made uncommonly swift progress. A so-called "*Intrigue*" was given before the opera proper, in total disregard of what followed, even though this was of the most sublime and sacred character. The libretti were mostly puerile productions, which have justly been ignored by historians of German literature. The singers were the best to be had under the circumstances, though cobblers, tailors and fishwives often led in the title roles. Even before the opera in Hamburg had deteriorated, and while such men as Keiser, Mattheson and the young Handel were there, it was customary to introduce French and Italian words into the text. As a work of art, the libretti as a whole had no elevating features. Beheading, while oxen and calf's blood flowed in streams, was a common feature, because "it is more to the point to act these things than to have them reported by a messenger."<sup>2</sup> In other libretti, words and gestures were so erotic and shameless as to forbid quotation. Conditions might have taken a turn for the better, however, as some of Germany's foremost poets, who soon followed, were interested in opera as a form of art, had not a great Italian invaded Vienna. This was Metastasio, who took Germany by storm at his first appearance and who reigned supreme for half a century. His first opera, entitled "*Didone*," was produced in Naples, in

<sup>1</sup> Langhans, *supra*, i, 440.

<sup>2</sup> Hotter, in the preface to his opera "*Stoertebecker und Joedje Michaels*."

1724. In 1730 he was called as court-poet to Vienna, where he remained until his death, in 1782.

Several years before his demise came the noted reform by *Gluck*. There is no evidence that Gluck wrote a single German opera, but this was chiefly the fault of existing conditions. What could a man of his stamp do with such libretti as those that have just been referred to? He held the stringent views upon the relation of text and music which the Florentine Camarata had promulgated before him, hence it was natural that he should look about for the very best texts. Of these he found none worthy of consideration at the beginning of his career, and in later life, in a foreign country and engaged with foreign productions, he felt the impossibility of writing a German opera. Though he seriously thought of putting Klopstock's "*Hermanschlacht*" to music, he was never fortunate enough to have a close acquaintance with the great literary men of his time and country, though these were in sympathy with his reform. *Wieland*<sup>1</sup> writes: "At last we have lived to see the time when the mighty genius of Gluck has undertaken the great task of musical reform. The success of his '*Orpheus*' would justify the greatest hopes were there no insurmountable difficulties to defeat his best intentions even in those European cities where the fine arts own the foremost temples. It is a great and courageous undertaking to elevate these arts to their original dignity and honor, which the rabble is wont to look upon as a means for sensuality, and to establish nature upon that throne which for so long a time has been usurped by the capricious power of custom, luxury and wanton sensuality."

*Herder*, too, was not insensible to the possibilities which a perfect union of poetry and music might bring about. In his dialogue: "*Ob Malerei oder Tonkunst eine groessere Wirkung gewaehre—ein Goettersgespraech*,"<sup>2</sup> he discusses the matter very seriously. Music complains that poets often mislead instead of leading her, but she is willing to admit that she and poetry are sisters, belonging inseparably together for the purpose of producing the greatest effect. But music resents being the hand-maiden of poetry, since she was poetry's tutor from the begin-

<sup>1</sup> *Wieland*, *Merkur*, 1775.

<sup>2</sup> *Herder*, *Hempel Edition*, ii, 237.

ning. In one of his book-reviews, Herder treats the same subject, using the same terms of appreciation of music.<sup>1</sup> Of far greater importance, however, are his remarks in "Adrastea," under the title of "Tanz. Melodrama."<sup>2</sup> Mere gestures, he says, even when accompanied by music, are not sufficient, but music augmented by poetry and supported by gesture opens a new field for poetry. This is exactly what Gluck taught. Yet what a deplorable difference between theory and practice! Herder ridicules the German opera most scathingly. "The librettist," he says, "Is scarcely ever mentioned; his words, very rarely understood nor worthy of being understood, simply give the musician a "musical thought" and an idea to the decorator. Has the composer gained anything by slighting the text? He may think to have improved his score, since he is at liberty to twist and turn his airs to his heart's content, but while creating something really great, he is hampered by worthless, shameless stuff. The music transports one into heaven, the text into purgatory—if not still lower." Then, having evident reference to Gluck, Herder lauds him as the man who will do away with this sort of rubbish, demolishing the rickety hut of operatic jingle-jangle and raising an Odeon in which poetry, music, action and decoration are cast from one mold.

With such appreciation it is deplorable that Gluck did not become acquainted with a poet with whom he could have worked in co-operation. Though this was not the case, his reform was significant, since it caused the Italian opera to diminish in popularity. The Germans, too, felt their national importance more and more. A new day was dawning; before this, however, could shed its full light, there was a short period which claims our attention, namely, the period of the co-operation of Christian Felix Weisse with Johann A. Miller, the composer.

In 1740, the Hamburg opera dissolved by reason of its own weakness. Three years later the "Merry Cobbler, or the Devil to Pay" was given in Berlin, under the title: "Der Teufel its los." The original was imported from England. The Schoenemann troupe gave it for the first time on the 24th of February, 1743, translated quite verbally by Casper W. von Borek, who had also

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, xxiv, 670.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv, 272.

put Shakespere's "Julius Cæsar" into rhyme.<sup>1</sup> The attempt was a decided failure, German taste having been ruined by the introduction of Italian intermezzi. These, as a rule, consisted of two acts, played between the second and third acts of the regular piece. Even Frederick the Great took much delight in these, though some were very obscene, especially in gestures, and translations were printed in Germany as early as 1725. They became so general, and the demand of the public was so urgent, that even Madam Neuber was forced to produce them. Koch, in competition with the Schoenemann troupe, had many intermezzi translated. Such an intermezzo was even put between the acts of Gottsched's "Cato," not at all to the liking of the author.

Under such conditions it was natural that men with higher ideals longed for something better, and Koch requested Weisse to prepare a translation of the "Devil," regardless of Borck's already existing translation. Weisse took up the task with a will and wrote many original songs. The piece was given October 6, 1752, and was received with great applause. Seven years later Weisse translated the second part, under the title: "Der lustige Schuster, eine komische Oper in drei Aufzuegen," which, however, marked a noticeable falling off from the first part, both in technique and content. The piece seems to have been written against Gottsched, who, as we shall see later, took a hostile attitude toward the opera.

The composer, Johann Adam Hiller, born in 1728, in Wendisch Ossig, near Goerlitz, co-operated with Weisse, and from now on they annually gave a new operetta in Leipzig. The most important ones were "Lottchen am Hofe" and "Die Liebe auf dem Lande," which Weisse made after foreign models. Subsequently he created original works, such as "Die Jagd," "Der Aerntekranz," "Der Dorfbarbier," "Die Schaefer als Pilgrime," and "Die Jubelhochzeit." All these pieces, however, whether original or worked over, clearly show their source, both as to their location and tendency. This source was *Rousseau*. The place of action is a rural district, hamlet or town; the tendency is a vain glorification of the naive virtues of the dwellers in those places as compared with the immoral, enervated folk in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Minor, C. F. Weisse, etc., 131.

higher stations of life, especially of those living in cities. They are "Singspiele" at best, intended to be spoken, with here and there a versified monologue or dialogue. The aria is the predominating feature in the singing, though an occasional duet, trio and even a quartet occurs. The productions, as a rule, remind one of Lessing's first dramatic works. A pair of lovers who became separated, a rival to the absent lover, gawky and clumsy; a forged letter, a married couple who quarrel, a second young couple, the return of the departed lover, the wedding celebration, not only of the first pair, but of the second also, this, however, without any previous development in the piece—that is the type which Weisse works on again and again. "Die Jubel-hochzeit," for instance, his last production, has little action. It was severely criticised even by his friends, Knebel,<sup>1</sup> Ramler and Thuemmel: "Three awful acts, badly written, without special action, full of base jokes with ordinary and slovenly-written verse."<sup>2</sup> It is especially poor in deep psychological moments, and when one of these arises, Weisse misses his opportunity. The piece is full of platitude, and Weisse's technique borders on the ridiculous. It is true, however, that many passable and a few really beautiful passages are to be found. These productions became very popular; various striking songs were caught up and sung by the people and they even became known in Italy and France.

Gottsched opposed the opera most vigorously.<sup>3</sup> In his "Noethiger Vorrath," of the year 1741, he rejoices that the opera has ceased to exist, and now it raised its head again before his eyes, and to him under the most hateful circumstances. That this revival came from England, that the Swiss school looked on complacently, and that Koch, with whom he had a falling out, instigated the whole movement, was more than he could bear. A book on the English theatre, in which considerable surprise is expressed that the English people had a taste for

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Knebel's *Nachlass*, ii, 169.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. Minor, *supra*, p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> J. Minor cites a folio at the Royal Library in Berlin in which the whole controversy is preserved. Cf. Appendix to his book, *supra*, p. 375 ff.

such miserable pieces as were then given, fell into his hands.<sup>1</sup> Encouraged by this, Gottsched made many comments favorable to the author and hostile to Koch.<sup>2</sup> In answer, Koch put the "Devil" on the boards again. An epilogue, written by one Steinel and spoken by Madam Koch, ended thus:

Deswegen hatten wir uns wirklich vorgenommen,  
Den "Teufel" weg zu thun. Doch hat es uns gereut,  
Und wir behalten ihn, wenn ihr's zufrieden seid.<sup>3</sup>

These lines challenged the public to act as judge, which they did in a most boisterous manner. Clapping, stamping and *da capo* cries, together with wild vocal applause, came from all parts of the house. Koch afterwards had to confess that he did wrong, but Gottsched's leadership was at an end. Subsequently, the opera flourished in Gotha, Mannheim, Frankfurt, Prague, Berlin, and even in minor places. Heermann as librettist and Wolf as composer co-operated in Weimar; in Gotha, Michaelis and Gotter wrote libretti, which Schweizer and Beuda put to music; Schwan and Faber worked together in Mannheim; in Frankfurt, Andre composed text and music himself; Henisch was rather productive in Prague; Eschenbach and Engel in Leipzig, and even Nicolai and Thuemmel caught the spirit, which shows how popular the opera had become. All these men followed Weisse more or less closely, and even *Goethe*, who did not find it beneath his dignity to write "Singspiele," depended also on Weisse, at least for the form of his productions.<sup>4</sup> "Erwin und Elmire" was begun in 1774 and laid away. About 1775, after his acquaintance with Lili, Goethe finished it and had it printed, though seventeen years later it was rewritten in Rome.<sup>5</sup> The sub-title of "Claudine von Villa Bella," written in its first draft, in 1775, described the piece as "Ein Schauspiel mit Gesang," but when the second version was written, also in Rome, it was merely styled "Ein Singspiel" (1788). The third

<sup>1</sup> "Lettre sur le theatre anglois avec une traduction de l'avare, comédie de Mr. Shadwell, et de la Femme de campagne, comédie de Mr. Wicherly, T. I., ii, 1752."

<sup>2</sup> "Neustes aus der anmuthigen Gelehrsamkeit," Hornung, 1753.

<sup>3</sup> From *Minor*, p. 148.

<sup>4</sup> W. Martinsen, *Goethe's Singspiele im Verhaeltnis zu den Weissischen Opern*. Diss., Dresden, 1887.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Letter to Herder, January 10, 1788.

piece of this genre, "Lila," was made in 1777, and given in honor of Duchess Louise on her birthday. This is not printed and even the old manuscript is unknown, but Goethe rewrote it, also in Rome, in such a way that it could not be recognized from the first draft.<sup>1</sup> Had we no other evidence relating to Goethe's interest in the operetta, these facts would be proof enough. The fact that these three pieces were made in three successive years, and all worked over in the time of his maturity and in Italy, where he changed his views in more than one respect, compels attention. The matter, however, is readily explained. In Italy he was brought into contact with the Opera Buffa, with their trivial texts written to Southern music. He felt himself called upon to give the Northern countries something similar, but with a worthy libretto. Accordingly, when he sent Herder the third act of "Claudine," he writes: "I hope it will please you only half as much as I am pleased to have finished it. Since I now know the needs of the lyric theatre more fully, it has been my endeavor to work into the hands of the composer and actor by means of many sacrifices. The threads in the texture upon which one wishes to embroider must be far apart, and for the purpose of a comic opera it must be woven like Marline; nevertheless I have had a care that my work might also be *read* with pleasure. At any rate, I did what I could."<sup>2</sup> It was his object to write pieces which were not altogether "senseless," yet he felt that these must be augmented by music in order to express the full intention of the poet.

But this was not all. In 1779, seven years before the Italian journey, he wrote "Jery und Baetly." In sending the production to Kayser, the composer, he accompanied it with a significant letter.<sup>3</sup> In it Kayser's attention is drawn to the fact that the piece contains three types of songs. First, those in which the auditor infers that the singer had learned them somewhere else, and uses them extemporaneously for the present occasion. These are to have particular, well-defined and rounded-out melodies, which draw sudden attention and are to be easily re-

<sup>1</sup>Schroer, *Deutsche Nat. Literatur, Goethe*, vii, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup>Letter, February 6, 1788.

<sup>3</sup>Schroer, *supra*, 247; Duentzer, *Neue Goethestudien*, 92; Burkhardt, *Goethe und der Komponist Ph. Chr. Kayser*, 1879, 21.

membered. Secondly, airs in which the singer expresses the emotions of the present moment, and which, carried away by the melody, he must sing from the depth of his heart. These must be sung with simplicity, truth and clearness, ranging from the slightest to the most violent expression of emotion. Thirdly, the rythmical dialogue. This lends action to the whole production, by means of which the composer is enabled either to retard the movement by spoken declamation in uneven measure, or to accelerate it by a quickly-moving, rolling melody. This rythmical dialogue must be properly gauged to the position, action and motion of the performer. This is highly important for the composer; he must never lose sight of it, so that pantomime and action become not too cumbersome. Kayser, furthermore, is advised to take notice that almost all dialogues in this particular piece have the same metre, and should he be fortunate enough to find a *leading theme*, suited for the purpose, he would do well to let it *sound through repeatedly*; but great care should be taken not to overdo matters in this respect, since the piece, towards the end, is composed almost exclusively of song. In a second letter to Kayser,<sup>1</sup> Goethe goes over the same ground again and gives his conception of the mutual relation between text and music.

Though Goethe had not the opportunity to work in co-operation with any of the great composers of his time, he continued to write his "Singspiele." In 1782, "Die Fischerin" was produced. It opens with "Erlkoenig" and contains several of Herder's folk-songs from "Stimmen der Voelker" in adaptation. "Es war ein Ritter, der reist' durch's Land," "Ich hab's gesagt schon meiner Mutter," and the final song: "Wer soll Braut sein" are typical examples. In "Scherz, List und Rache" the influence of the Italian intermezzi is noticeable. Kayser had written from Italy that he would gladly write an Opera Buffa in co-operation with him, and in answer to this,<sup>2</sup> Goethe confesses to have had the desire to write one, especially since he had heard at least a dozen of them the previous winter. "Scherz, List und Rache" was the result, though it is plainly more than an inter-

---

<sup>1</sup> January 20, 1780.

<sup>2</sup> Letter, June 28, 1784.



mezzo. Under the head of finished operettas, "Proserpina," and "Der Triumph der Empfindsamkeit" may be mentioned. Left fragmentary, or only begun, are "Die ungleichen Hausgenossen," "Theatralische Abenteuer," "Der Zauberfloete Zweiter Teil," "Die Danaiden," and "Der Loewenstul."

Goethe could not have written an opera in the sense that Wagner used the term, since he was not a professional musician. His limitations were too great. His productions were mere "Singspiele" in form, and, viewed in this light, no progress had been made since Weisse, though Goethe wrote this genre from 1774-1795, a period of twenty-one years. It is true, he became tired of the regular metres in verse, and states that he intentionally avoided the eternal change between the iambic, trochaic and dactylic movements, but as a result of this, some of his verses are merely metrical prose.

Most of Goethe's "Singspiele" are farcial. They turn upon related themes: To gain the love of a coy maiden by means of a rough joke in "Jery und Baetely," to teach punctuality by means of a pleasant device in the "Fischerin," to regain possessions fraudulently taken, by means of bold tricks in "Scherz, List und Rache," to cure the wild imaginations of a disordered mind by means of cunning, yet psychologically contrived deceptions, in "Lila." All this was according to Goethe's nature. When all is said, his influence on the opera was small.

Another star had arisen in Germany which, for the time being, drew the attention of all Europe—Mozart. Before he was seventeen years old, Mozart had composed six Italian operas, of which nothing but the titles remain. Though his first important production, "Idomeo, Re di Creta" (1780), was also Italian, he had, as early as 1775, the burning desire to write a German opera. About this time he even had the dream of establishing German opera in Vienna.<sup>1</sup> The circumstances for the fulfilment of such a dream were auspicious; Joseph II. was looking for a "Capellmeister" with a knowledge of German, one possessed of genius and able to produce something new. Gluck had ceased composing, and though Italian influence was still strongly felt, through the works of Salieri, "the idol of the

---

<sup>1</sup> L. Nohl, *Life of Mozart*, trans. by J. L. Lalor, p. 88.

emperor," the time was ripe for German opera. In 1782, Mozart appeared with his first German production, "Die Entführung aus dem Serail." The success of this work was assured from the very beginning. Even Goethe felt that his endeavors in the "Singspiel" went for naught when Mozart's piece appeared.<sup>1</sup> He says: "All the pains we took to confine ourselves within narrow limits went for nothing when Mozart appeared. The 'Entführung aus dem Serail' threw all else into the shade, and our carefully worked out piece ('Scherz, List und Rache') was never heard of again at any theatre." This could, certainly, not have been the fault of Goethe's texts; they were a step in the right direction, and far above any libretti that Mozart put to music. The fact is that Mozart, so far as the texts were concerned, had wholly lost sight of the noble inheritance of Gluck. This marks a decided retrogression in the development of libretti in Germany. The text of the "Entführung," written by Bretzner,<sup>2</sup> was done fairly well, but Mozart tampered with it considerably. The composer's father reproved him for having done so, and his letter in reply gives a clear exposition of his own views.<sup>3</sup> He says: "Now about the text of the opera. . . . After all, the poetry must be the handmaid of the music. Why do Italian comic operas always please, in spite of their wretched librettos, even in Paris, as I was witness myself? Because the music is supreme, and everything else is forgotten. All the more, then, will an opera be likely to please in which the plan of the piece is well carried out and the words are written simply to suit the music; not turned and twisted so as to ruin the composition for the sake of a miserable rhyme, which does far more harm than good in a dramatic representation." Thus, to use the phraseology of Jahn, Mozart looks upon the text as a co-operating, and not as a dominating element; he justifies his position by pointing out that perfect poetry is weak when joined to bad music, whereas bad poetry becomes quite respectable when combined with excellent music. *Lessing*, too, makes several remarks

<sup>1</sup> *Briefwechsel mit Zelter*, ii, 121; *Riemer, Mitteilungen*, ii, 292.

<sup>2</sup> "Belmont und Constanze, oder die Entführung aus dem Serail." Eine Operetti in drei Akten von C. F. Bretzner, Leipzig, 1781.

<sup>3</sup> Letter, October 13, 1781; cf. Jahn, *Das Leben Mozart's*, trans. by Pauline D. Townsend, London, 1891, ii, 226.

on this important subject.<sup>1</sup> He observes that there was a time when music and poetry were united; he is not ready, however, to assert that their separation was not a natural process. He laments that one is usually treated as a mere auxiliary to the other, where they ought to be united for the purpose of creating the greatest possible effect; nevertheless, he finds it reasonable that bad poetry is used by composers, not because it is bad, but, in not being succinct and terse, it better fits their purpose. Lessing merely theorizes, but has no suggestions to offer.

Mozart's two most important German operas are very poor from the viewpoint of their texts. The "Entführung" is slightly constructed as a drama, and the story is put together with weak materials. It was presented to a full house for the first time on July 13, 1782, and the people went wild with enthusiasm. In spite of Mozart's protest that he did not want it run to death, it was repeatedly given, regardless of the intense summer heat. From now on the German opera was firmly established; all criticism was silenced, and it is easily understood why Goethe complains that all else in this line, even his own "Singspiele," was put into the shade. An English version of the piece was given at Covent Garden, in 1827, under the title of "The Seraglio," but so many liberties were taken, both with text and music, that it can hardly be identified.

Mozart's last German work was the famous "Zauberfloete," finished shortly before his death, in 1791. Schikaneder, born in poverty, in 1751, almost illiterate, but possessed of wit and a good talent, gave the text to Mozart with the request to put it into music. The piece, really supposed to have been written by K. L. Gieseke, is based on Wieland's "Dschinnistan." The plot is weak, it contains many contradictions and the characters are anything but human. The verse is poor, Schikaneder's stage effects and Mozart's music make it what it is, else it would not be worth mentioning. There was a great contrast between its reception and that of the "Entführung," in that it came dangerously near to being a failure. Repeated performances, however, increased its popularity, and on October 22, 1795, Schikaneder reported its two hundredth representation. This

---

<sup>1</sup> Laokoon, *Entwürfe und Fragmente*, Cotta Ed., x, p. 222 f.

popularity, no doubt, attracted the attention of Goethe, who made the following statement on the subject to Wranitzky, on January 24, 1796: "The favor with which the 'Zauberfloete' has been received, and the difficulty of writing a piece able to compete with it, has suggested to me the idea of finding in it the subject for a new work. I wish to meet the preference of the public half way, and to simplify the performance of a new and complicated piece, both for the actors and the theatrical management. I believe I shall best attain this end by writing a second part to the 'Zauberfloete.' The characters are familiar to the public and the actors, and, having the earlier piece before me, it will be possible to heighten the climax in the situations and events without exaggerating them. Thus, I expect to give life and interest to the whole piece." That Goethe wrote this second part in fragmentary form is well known, but it has rightly been pointed out<sup>1</sup> that there is something pathetic in the author of "Faust" thus taking up Schikaneder's production. Both Goethe and Schiller were enough interested in the opera as a form of art to give it their attention even when it had been carried out with such miserable craftsmanship. They speak of it repeatedly in their letters,<sup>2</sup> and it is deplorable that circumstances never brought them together with some one of the great composers. Herder defends the moral tendency of the "Zauberfloete,"<sup>3</sup> speaking of its theme as "Light in the struggle with darkness," and calling attention to the fact that, though the verse is mere doggerel, some of its songs have taken a strong hold on the public conscience.

The next composer to consider is *Beethoven*. When sixteen years old, he was introduced to Mozart and played a piece for him, which he received rather coldly, whereupon the young man asked the master for a theme. Having received it, he played so remarkably, giving such flight to phantasy, that Mozart went into an adjoining room and said to his friends assembled there, "Keep an eye on him, some day he will make the whole world

<sup>1</sup> Kuerschner Edition, *Goethe*, vii, 415.

<sup>2</sup> *Goethe and Schiller Briefwechsel*, Cotta Ed., letters 144, 396, 426, 543, 815, 860, 868.

<sup>3</sup> *Adrastea* Hempel Edition, xiv, 286.

speak of him." This prophecy has been fulfilled long since, though so far as our subject is concerned, Beethoven comes into consideration only with one work—"Fidelio." Curiously enough, it was Schikaneder again who instigated the creation of a German opera in this case. Beethoven always had special interest in this form of art and he was easily persuaded to undertake the task. He had many plans and intended even to put Shakespeare's "Macbeth" and Goethe's "Faust" into music. Once in his life he even offered himself to the directors of the theatre with the promise to write at least one great opera annually and besides, one operetta, divertissement and choruses. Collin began with the arrangement of the text of "Macbeth," which was never finished, but no one was found willing to arrange "Faust" as an opera text. In 1815, Beethoven began the composition of Treitschke's "Romulus," but never finished it. At the time of his death he was engaged upon Grillparzer's "Melusina," but it never saw the light, and since his death nothing has been heard of it. Beethoven's field was in another direction; in spite of his many plans, he had not the strong inward promptings for the opera which characterized Mozart.

His only production, "Fidelio," is based on Bouilly's "Leonore, ou l'amour conjugal." This seemed to be a worthy subject to the artist, who confessed that he had a strong desire to glorify conjugal love. The text, as it is now known, went through several changes. Written by Sonnleithner, it seems to have been composed of three acts, which Stephen Breuning worked over into two, causing Beethoven no little trouble to adapt the music anew. After the opera had been given several times, not with the success which it deserved, it remained neglected for almost eight years. Beethoven then requested Fr. Treitschke to revise the text once more, which he did, with Sonnleithner's permission. He rewrote the dialogue almost entirely,<sup>1</sup> but the opera, in its present form, was not finished until 1814. The necessity of these repeated changes in the text gives evidence of its poverty, and even now "Fidelio" is great only in music. As yet there is no advance in the quality of the libretto.

It is not surprising that the Romantic movement, which in-

---

<sup>1</sup> For the whole revision, cf. Treitschke's report, reprinted in Wasielewski, *L. von Beethoven*, Berlin, p. 259.

fluenced so many other fields of human thought and activity, should also have touched that of music. Zelter, in his relation to Goethe's lyrics, Franz Schubert, Loewe and, in a certain sense, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Robert Franz, are the foremost lyrical composers. Somewhat later, but none the less intense, this influence came upon the operatic stage, brought about chiefly by Spohr and Weber. Louis Spohr, though only two years older than Weber, was the first to follow in the path of Romanticism.

His chief operatic works were "Faust" (1815), "Zemire und Azor" (1821), and "Jessonda" (1823), but, like so many others, he was unfortunate in the choice of his texts.<sup>1</sup> Spohr made a decided mistake when he took Kotzebue's old and forgotten play for an opera. When Gounod's "Faust" displaced Spohr's opera of the same name, it was not alone the music of the Frenchman which gave greater prominence to his production, for the extremely weak libretto was much to blame. The Romantic movement brought no change for the better along these lines, a fact which is also illustrated in C. M. von Weber's works. "Preciosa," written by Alexander Wolff, would be lost in utter oblivion were it not for Weber's music. "Euryanthe" never had the success it deserved because the libretto is too weak to carry it through; Helmine von Chezy, its author, lacked in dramatic craftsmanship from more than one point of view. "Abu Hassan," written by Hiemer and taken from the "Arabian Nights," is full of nonsense, though it amuses by its lightheartedness and gaiety of spirit.<sup>2</sup> The text of "Oberon" is adapted from Wieland's poem of the same name, it is most fantastic, without any strict order of succession either in the matter of time or locality.<sup>3</sup> The "Frieschuetz" has outlived all of Weber's operas. It was written by Friedrich Kind,<sup>4</sup> and is Romantic in every sense of the term. Thus, we have seen that now and then new German operas were appearing, but the quality of the texts remained ever the same. We are now ready to look into Wagner's work.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. H. M. Schletterer: "L. Spohr," in *Sammlung Musikalischer Vortraege*, Dritte Reihe, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Annesley, *Standard Opera Glass*, London, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Annesley, *supra*, p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> For the relation of Kind's opera to Apel's novel, "Der Freischuetz," cf. Ambros, *Bunte Blaetter*, p. 1; and *Bunte Blaetter*, Neue Folge, p. 93. Cf. also, Langhans, *supra*, ii, 361.

## CHAPTER I

### RICHARD WAGNER—GENESIS AND CONCEPTION OF HIS WORK. STATEMENT OF THE SUBJECT

IN 1821, when the "Freischuetz" was written, *Richard Wagner* was eight years old. He had a natural gift for language, which, in his earlier years, drew him more to poetry than to music. In 1822, he entered the "Kreuzschule" and made rapid progress in the study of the classical languages, and especially of Greek. When eleven years old, one of his poems outclassed all others, and was subsequently printed. He learned English with ease, and as a mere lad read Shakespeare. He presently wrote a tragedy based on "Hamlet" and "Lear." This was crude enough, to be sure, for he relates, humorously, that forty-two persons died in the first acts, forcing him to let most of them return as ghosts, else he would not have had enough persons for the last act.<sup>1</sup> His relatives spoke of him as a coming poet until, when fourteen years old, his real musical gifts were shown. In the "Gewandhaus Concerts" he heard Beethoven's music and at once the desire came to him to create something similar. In his subsequent development, nevertheless, he was neither exclusively poet nor exclusively musician. Later in life he says:<sup>2</sup> "In my musical studies I could never rid myself of the poetic impulse, though it became subservient to music. Thus I recall, having been incited by a pastoral symphony, that I set to work on a pastoral which in its dramatic aspects was influenced by Goethe's "Laune des Verliebten." I made no draft of the text, but wrote text and music simultaneously, intrusting the development of the various situations to chance."

When Wagner was twenty-one years old he sounded for the first time the key-note to his subsequent reform of the opera. In a magazine article he complained that the Germans had no

<sup>1</sup> *Gesammelte Schriften*, x, 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, 312.

opera.<sup>1</sup> This was literally true. The operatic stage had again deteriorated. Most musical theatres were supplied with translations of French and Italian operas, and in Dresden, German operas were even translated into Italian before they were produced, until Weber insisted that they be given in the original.<sup>2</sup> But this was not all. Wagner was convinced that if the opera was to achieve something effective, it would have to be liberated from the thralldom of miserable libretti. In 1833, he went to Wuerzburg, where his older brother, Albert, was engaged as singer, actor and manager. Here he made his first acquaintance with the theatre and wrote his first opera, "Die Feen," following Gozzi's fairy tale, "La donna serpente." In 1834, he composed his second opera, "Das Liebesverbot," founded on Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure." Both works were unsuccessful; the "Feen" was never produced, and the "Liebesverbot" only once, in Magdeburg, March 29, 1836. While living in Königsberg and Riga, he struggled for existence and had to do work which was extremely uncongenial to him, but he was never without great plans. Thus, "Die hohe Braut," a novel of H. Koenig, inspired him to make of it a great opera of five acts. He actually sent a complete draft of it to *Scribe*, in Paris, with the request to work it out in French for the grand opera there, and to see that he be appointed to write the music. This scheme failed, but undaunted, Wagner worked the material over into the form which was subsequently set to music by Johann Fr. Kittl (1809-68), under the title, "Bianca und Giuseppe, oder die Franzosen von Nizza."<sup>3</sup> Soon after this he read Bulwer's "Rienzi," which he used for an opera, and with the completion of this ends the first period of Wagner, the librettist. The three pieces so far mentioned were made after the manner of the regular libretti.

Finding no stage for "Rienzi," Wagner resolved to try his fortunes in Paris, where Gluck, fifty years before him, and Meyerbeer, his contemporary, were so eminently successful. On his four week's journey thither by sea he resolved to use "Der fliegende Hollaender" for an opera. Disappointments in France

<sup>1</sup> *Zeitung fuer die elegante Welt*, Wagner's article: "Die Deutsche Oper."

<sup>2</sup> *Bayreuther Blaetter*, viii, 203.

<sup>3</sup> Langhans, *supra*, ii, 470.



came heavy and fast, and as a last resource, prompted by Meyerbeer, he offered the draft of the "Hollaender" to the director of the grand opera. He expected, of course, to receive the commission of setting it to music. After waiting a whole year for an answer, he learned that the subject had indeed been used for a French text, but someone else had been entrusted with the composition of the music. His anger was somewhat assuaged when he was offered five hundred franks and the privilege of using the material himself if he chose to do so. He immediately set to work on a German text and completed the music in seven weeks. This is the opera in which Wagner found himself. He knew that his conceptions were at variance with the traditional opera in Germany, and from a mere librettist he now became a poet. His work was not received with the enthusiasm which it deserved, but unmindful of the outcome, he wrote "Tannhaeuser," in 1844, continuing along the same lines. In 1845, he drafted "Lohengrin" and the "Meistersinger zu Nuernberg." Then came the year 1848, which was of such great importance to him and to his future.

He had already conceived the plan of working the Nibelung material into dramatic form, but felt that before, or at least while doing so, he would have to explain his newly-conceived views on art in special essays. "Art and Revolution," accordingly, was printed in September, 1849. In a letter dated September 16, he advised Uhlig, an intimate friend, to get a copy so soon as it should leave the press, since it was intended merely as a precursor to works of greater detail, namely, "The Art Work of the Future" and "The Artists of the Future." "If I accomplish this to my satisfaction, I shall then set to work at the music of my 'Siegfried,' for that is what I desire with all the sincerity of my soul." "Siegfried's Death" was all that at this time existed of the "Ring." This was subsequently considerably changed, and is now known as "Goetterdaemmerung." The work was dropped, however, because it was no longer in harmony with Wagner's inner life, nor with the unhappy political condition at the time. Besides several other plans, Wagner had conceived a dramatization of "Jesus of Nazareth,"<sup>1</sup> which

---

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Letter to Uhlig, August 9, 1849.

though quite maturely thought out, was also dropped because he felt the impossibility of receiving a public hearing for such a subject.<sup>1</sup>

On a spring morning Wagner left Dresden, went to Paris and from there to Switzerland, where he remained for nine years, returning then to Paris. Almost simultaneously with the conception of "Siegfried's Death," he had conceived the idea of creating an opera on "Wieland der Schmied." In a letter to Uhlig, dated December 27, 1849, he states that he will be in Paris by the sixteenth of the next month, and will then take up the completed opera scheme of "Wieland." That this intention was not carried out is shown by a letter, written about one month later, in which, among other things, he says: "From the Alps I will write you a German 'Wieland' which the people, some day, will understand." Even in Paris he worked at it, however, though with slight progress and under difficulties. "With endless trouble," he writes, "I forced myself to my 'Wieland;' it sounded to me like *comment vous portez-vous?* The ink would not flow, the pen scratched, the weather was bad and dull." Eight months later he was entirely estranged from this subject, as a letter to Princess Wittgenstein shows.<sup>2</sup> In it he writes: "The poem ('Wieland') in its present condition, and as I now hand it over to you, is the production of a painful and deeply-moving inspiration. . . . It takes me back to a time in which I no longer wish to be placed. I cannot now finish the work, either in poetry or music; even if I should find tranquillity to work at it again, I fear to have grown cold toward it. Thus I have recently accustomed myself to the thought of giving it up entirely." In his exile and sojourn from place to place, in his conceptions of ever new plans, Wagner had never wholly given up the Nibelung material.

The year 1848 was important to Wagner in another respect. Before leaving Dresden he formed a closer acquaintance with Franz Liszt, to whom he had been introduced eight years before.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1887, by Siegfried Wagner, under the title: *Ein dichterischer Entwurf aus dem Jahre 1848.* Breitkopf und Haertel.

<sup>2</sup> *Wagner-List Briefwechsel*, i, 101.

<sup>3</sup> Letter, March 24, 1841.

This friendship has been compared with that of Goethe and Schiller, and rightly so.<sup>1</sup> Liszt continually urged Wagner to complete his "Siegfried," though he naturally was unconscious of the wealth of material which the poet-musician would yet produce. Misunderstood by the public in general and ridiculed by his enemies, Wagner at this time was sick at heart. The time had not yet come to give his ideas an appreciative hearing. Referring both to his theoretical writings and to the operas so far produced, he writes:<sup>2</sup> "My literary attempt to set myself right with the world, and to explain these ideas of mine, could only be looked upon in my own country as the outpourings of an eccentric opera-composer—performances to be as promptly as possible consigned to oblivion, and coming from a man whom the fever of the revolution had hurried into the wildest fancies; and whose exile, besides, had already put a complete end to his possibilities as an artist. I was in a fair way to become utterly isolated . . . and to be driven back to absolute despair . . . but for that craving which is always active in the human mind for some possibility of communicating its feelings to a sympathetic intelligence, when suddenly the brightest hopes were rekindled in me . . . by the discovery of a new, and only, artist friend. In Weimar, the little poet-town of Thuringia, something had happened which was to have the most important and lasting effect upon my art life. A great artist, who understood me and my work fully and thoroughly, Franz Liszt, had for the first time produced my 'Lohengrin,' which I had already learned to lament over as a work the hopes of whose appearance must be finally abandoned. . . . This bold venture was the beginning of the formation of an association of friends and co-workers which at first clustered around the honored person of the great master. Taught and encouraged by him, a band of adherents sprang up to support my aims in art, neglected and despised though they were by the world at large. Though my writings might not be read in Germany, and my works never produced there, here was a true art-life for me; here was the foundation laid for a future; here was something beginning to

---

<sup>1</sup> *Schiller-Goethe Briefwechsel*, Cotta Edition, i, 4.

<sup>2</sup> "Work and Mission of My Life," *North American Review*, 1879, article 2.

develop which might give me a hopeful presage of my long-dreamed-of idea of a nation art-inspired. And from this circle there now came to me my friend's appeal to finish for him, and this people gathered about him, my new work formed from the vast Nibelung legend—my tragedy of 'Siegfried.'"

To show Wagner's moods and Liszt's untiring encouragement, and hence, the important part which he, no doubt consciously, played in the development of our drama, it may suffice to add a few extracts from the correspondence of the two men. Liszt writes:<sup>1</sup> "I am very happy that you will not give up your 'Siegfried,' which certainly will be 'una gran bella cosa!' as the Italians say. I rejoice to think of it." And, "Germany is your inheritance—and you its glory! Finish your 'Siegfried' soon: you are richly endowed with power and genius, but be sure not to lose patience." Moods of despondency came over Wagner at this time, due to absolute financial destitution, but Liszt comforted him in every extremity, not only with glowing words, but with material aid. To this "Siegfried"<sup>2</sup> owes much. "I had again become cold and diffident, and the thought of entering upon a new work of art created in me but disdainful mockery. Artistic indolence far and wide about me is so great, my mood so hopeless, that just now I can only consider myself a joke when thinking of the compositions of my 'Siegfried.' This mood affected all my other works. . . . But now you come near me again, you have touched and transported, you have warmed and inspired me so that I swam in tears and suddenly knew no higher passion than to be an artist and to create works. The influence you have had upon me is simply inexpressible; round about me I see nothing save verdant spring, germinating and sprouting life; and along with this, so passionate a grief, such painfully intoxicating passion, such joy to be a human being and to feel a palpitating heart, that I only lament the necessity of having to write you all this."<sup>3</sup>

That Wagner worked sincerely at his Nibelung material, thoroughly revising his old conceptions and gaining new ones,

<sup>1</sup> *Briefwechsel*, October, 1850, i, 104.

<sup>2</sup> *Briefwechsel*, January 3, 1851, i, 114.

<sup>3</sup> *Briefwechsel*, April 18, 1851, i, 122.

is made evident by the fact that he now meets difficulties which are always a sign of progress. His former plan threatens to go to pieces in two respects: He does not yet know how to give his material other than epic form, and the action of the play presupposed too many things yet unmentioned, which, in some way or other, he must present to the spectator. Thereupon he conceived the idea of creating "Der junge Siegfried" which was to precede "Siegfried's Death," and was to explain much that is merely alluded to in the latter drama. But even this was not satisfactory, and "tortured by these feelings," he hit upon the idea of a trilogy with an introduction, as we now have it. Disclosing these difficulties to his friends,<sup>1</sup> he bids them farewell, with the prediction that they will not see him again until he shall appear with his completed work.

We have another reference to Wagner's works where he explains his difficulties and the subsequent solution of his problem even more clearly than in the one just mentioned. In a long letter to Liszt<sup>2</sup> he says: "This young 'Siegfried,' too, is only a fragment, and as a unit in itself, it can in no wise make a positive and undoubted impression until it receives its proper place in the completed work which, according to my present plan, I shall assign to it in 'Siegfried's Death.' In both of these dramas an abundance of necessary relations was assigned to mere narration or given to the auditor in such a manner that he had to make his own combinations; all those details which gave the action and the actors such infinite, stirring and far-reaching importance, had to be omitted from presentation and communicated to mere thought. According to my present inmost conviction, it is possible for the drama to have its true effect only when the intention of dramatic poetry is exclusively imparted to the *senses* in all important aspects; hence I, least of all, dare to transgress against this truth. Now, in order to be fully understood, this very observation forces me to present the whole mythos in its deepest and broadest signification, in its highest artistic lucidity. Nothing must remain to be supplemented either by thought or reflection; through its own artistic

---

<sup>1</sup> "Mitteilung an meine Freunde."

<sup>2</sup> *Briefwechsel*, November 20, 1851, i, 147.

perceptibility, each unaffected human emotion must be able to *comprehend the whole work*, and when this is accomplished, each unit of the whole will be rightly understood. In my mythos, therefore, two chief aspects remain to be presented, both of which are alluded to in 'Joung Siegfried': the first in the narration of Brunnhild after her awakening (third act), the second in the scene between Alberich and the Wanderer, in the second, and between the Wanderer and Mime, in the first act. If you examine these materials somewhat closely, you can easily understand that it was not only artistic reflection, but chiefly the excellent and productive material which led me to present it. Think of the wonderful, disastrous love of Siegmund and Sieglinde, of Wotan, in his deep, mysterious relation to this love; think of him in his estrangement from Fricka, in his infuriated self-control when he, in accordance with custom, decrees Siegmund's death; think of the stately valkyr, Brunnhild, how she, apprehending Wotan's inmost thoughts, defies the God and is punished by him; think of this wealth of suggestions as material for a drama preceding 'Siegfried,' as I refer to it in the scene between Wanderer and Wala, and again, with greater elucidation, in Brunnhild's narration, and you will understand that it was not only mere reflection, it was inspiration which gave me my newest plan. Now this plan is intended for three dramas: 1. 'Die Walkuere;' 2. 'Die junge Siegfried;' 3. 'Siegfried's Tod.' But to give these dramas completely, it is necessary to supply them with a great prelude: 'Der Raub des Rheingolds.' This prelude is to contain everything that appears as *narration* in 'Jung Siegfried:'. The robbery of the Rheingold, the origin of the Nibelungenhort, its abduction by Wotan, and the curse of Alberich. Through this lucidity of *presentation* all broad narration will be dropped, or will at least be concentrated into concise moments; moreover, I shall thus gain abundant space to intensify most thrillingly the wealth of relationships, whilst in my earlier, half epic presentation, I was obliged to curtail everything most laboriously, thereby weakening the whole."

This was written in 1851, and gives a fair idea of the vast development of the drama within the last three important years. In letters to Uhlig, in October, 1851, and especially in the one dated November 12, 1851, he also discusses his difficulties in a

manner to throw additional light on our knowledge of the genesis of the work. Here we learn that he had sketched the whole mythos in its gigantic sequence before writing "Siegfried's Death," and in thus working it up, all changes had to come slowly, but logically, one step necessitating the next. What he calls, in his correspondence with Liszt, a substitution of presentation for narration, he here describes as "Plastic Style." Then, again, he asks for a copy of the Voelsunga-Saga (probably the translation made by von den Hagen). On November 20, 1851, he sent "Joung Siegfried" to Liszt. In December, 1851, he was still hard at work on the whole poem, it being his "only salvation." In March, 1852, he again complained of being "frightfully fagged," but says that in the face of spring, and going to work on his poem, he takes fresh courage. In July, 1852, he thought the poem would not be done before fall.<sup>1</sup> "I must carefully retouch the two 'Siegfrieds,' especially in everything concerning the myth of the Gods, for this has now assumed a more precise and imposing aspect. I greatly rejoice at the thought of the music." In November he still worked at "Joung Siegfried," but now he hoped to have it printed soon: "then I shall attack 'Siegfried's Death.' This will take me longer. I have two scenes in it to write afresh (the Norns and that of Brunnhild with the valkyries), and above all, the close. Besides these, *everything* needs most important revision." On July first, "Walkuere" was finished; on November ninth, "Rheingold" received the last stroke of the pen; and in the last weeks of this important year, 1852, the text of the whole work was practically completed. On February 11, 1853, he sent the complete poem to Liszt.<sup>2</sup> About six months previously he had the idea of printing it in twenty or thirty copies for his friends, but hesitated, for financial reasons. On July 22, the Haertels, to whom he had addressed himself about the printing, answered that it would afford them the greatest pleasure and honor if he would give them his work for publication when ready. On August 9, he begs Uhlig to be more careful in handling the MS. of "Joung Siegfried" about, for he had read a joke in the *Kreuzzeitung*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Uhlig, July 2, 1852.

<sup>2</sup> *Briefwechsel*, February 28, 1853, i, 223.

<sup>3</sup> This newspaper joke discouraged him greatly. He seems to have accused

about the *Lindwurm Fafner*, an experience which made him very averse to carry out his intention of distributing copies of the whole poem, even among his friends.<sup>1</sup> Early in 1853 the drama was printed, for a letter in March of that year to Ferdinand Heine announces that Wagner will send him a copy.<sup>2</sup> From now on little was done on the work for ten years, when, in 1863, it was published. Changes were made here and there, and it is thus made clear that the author wrote, recast and revised plan and text for a period of almost fifteen years.

The musical composition went through a similar process. In the letter just referred to, he tells Liszt that the composition is not yet begun, but the prospect of setting music to all this has a great charm. Though nothing had yet been scored, form and outline of the music were vividly before him; and early in March, 1853, expecting a visit from Liszt in the near summer months, he expresses the hope of being able to show him a few musical sketches. Again he is seized with despondency—a mood in which it is difficult to write music like that in the Nibelung drama. “Surrounded by tedium and dullness, I am doomed to perish. Why could one not throw all this overboard and begin an entirely new life? How stupid it is, after all, for you to drudge and toil for me—simply to help me? Ah, no! There is no help for me in this fashion—help at best for my ‘glory,’ and that is a thing entirely distinct from my own real self. No correspondence can be profitable for me now, and my whole intercourse with the world exists on paper only—what can help me? My nights are mostly sleepless—fagged and miserable I leave my couch to stare into the face of another day which is destined to bring me not one single satisfaction! An intercourse which only torments me, one from which I withdraw only to be again tormented within myself! In whatever I undertake, loathing seizes me. Things cannot go on in this way! I do not care to

---

Liszt of carelessness in lending the manuscript. The latter not only cleared himself of the accusation, but urged Wagner on in his usual tender way. Nevertheless, it has not been made quite clear how the newspapers got possession of the facts.

<sup>1</sup> *Briefwechsel*, August 23, 1852, i, 183.

<sup>2</sup> For the names of those who received copies of this small edition, cf. Letter to Liszt, February 11, 1853, *Briefwechsel*, i, 214 f.



bear life any longer.”<sup>1</sup> Such moods do not further literary intentions. Lamenting his exile and his various adverse experiences, he breaks out from the depth of his soul: “Lord forgive them, for they know not what they do.” . . . “My mind is confused, I crave for a long, long sleep from which I desire to awake only to embrace you.”<sup>2</sup> Liszt’s visit a few weeks later gave him great encouragement. Upon the return of the former to Weimar, he weaves bits of cheer and sunshine into his letters to Wagner: “*Con doppio movimento sempre crescendo ffff!* This we shall witness at the presentation of your Nibelung drama.” Nevertheless, the composition did not progress as rapidly as he had expected. On December 17, 1853, he writes to Liszt: “It is now five years since I have written music. Now I am at ‘Nibelheim,’ Mime lamented his troubles to-day. Last month I was unhappily seized by a severe cold, so that I could not work for ten days; otherwise I should certainly have finished my outlines this year. Yet this must be done by the end of January.”<sup>3</sup> This expectation was fulfilled.<sup>4</sup> “‘Rheingold’ is finished, and so am I!” Again he broods over and bewails his poverty. “Well, ‘Rheingold’ is finished—more finished than I believed. With what confidence, with what joy did I go at the music! I continued and finished it with madness of despair; alas, how much was I, too, surrounded by the want of gold—believe me, my music is frightful, it is a quagmire of horrors and sublimity.” A month later he wrote the score to “Rheingold” with instrumentation. In March he is working again with great effort and thinks that, if he could get some one to write out his sketches, it might be done in two years.<sup>5</sup> Early in June he expects to begin “Walkuere;” in August the second act is scored;<sup>6</sup> towards the end of the year he works at the second half of the last act; in January, 1855, he expects to begin the instrumentation of “Walkuere,” but it lingered on for over a year, until, on April 29, 1856, he writes to Uhlig: “At last ‘Walkuere’ is done. Now I shall soon set to work on my ‘Joung Siegfried.’”<sup>7</sup> Herein Wagner was

<sup>1</sup> *Briefwechsel*, i, 230.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 245.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 425.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, December 17, 1853, i, 294.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, January 15, 1854, ii, 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, March 4, 1854, ii, 14.

greatly mistaken; only the first two acts of "Siegfried" were scored.<sup>1</sup> Again he became greatly discouraged. He had not even a hope of obtaining a publisher, and nothing was scored for eight years. In this and other intermissions "Tristan and Isolde" was created. Ultimately, in the beginning of 1869, "Siegfried" was finished, and in 1874 the last score of "Goetterdaemmerung" was written. Thus Wagner's "Ring" went through a progression of revision and change, both in poetry and music, for a period of twenty-six years.

If for no other reason, this fact alone would merit the serious consideration of the subject. This drama is not a work of mere chance, it was not dashed off in a hot desire for fame and immortality, however much his critics have thus descried it. He had definite, well-matured conceptions of his art, though for the mere sake of bread and butter he was sometimes induced to override them. Now, however, encouraged by Liszt to complete his "Siegfried" material, and having at last published these conceptions for all who cared to read them, he had cast aside the discouragement that adverse criticism, especially that of a hostile press, had caused, and had again become, as he writes: "an artist purified and independent. It was with new zest that I now carried out my new plan of embodying in complete poetic form . . . the whole wide-embracing scheme of the Nibelung myth. . . . In the actual carrying out of my undertaking, I became once more the true, untrammelled artist, unfettered by any hesitation or questioning. Since I had freed my mind of all doubt and confusion, by my theoretical writings, I was now once more able to go on in the way I had begun, with an artist's confidence, to embody my ideas in the form I had myself thought out. As I went on in the work itself, the way in which it sometime must be presented also took shape in my mind. And when I thought of the one single possibility of an appreciative auditor offered by my friend, and imagined that this expanded into *general* appreciation, my boldly-conceived plan of representation no longer seemed a mere picture of fancy to me. . . . This example ('Siegfried') was to be free from all inartistic influences and dependencies of the wretched conventional stage. . . .

---

<sup>1</sup> Done, October 29, 1857; *cf.* letter to W. Fischer.

This example should stand for itself, complete, independent."<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Liszt<sup>2</sup> he exclaims: "Yes, yes, my dear, precious Liszt! I owe it to you that I can soon be an artist again, pure and simple. I look upon the long-delayed resumption of my artistic plans, to which I now return, as one of the most decisive moments of my life; between the musical elaboration of my 'Lohengrin' and my 'Siegfried' lies for me a stormy, but, I know, a prolific world. I had to clear away a whole life that lay behind me; had to bring to a vivid consciousness the dust of a mere apprehension and, in order to place myself again into the beautiful unconsciousness of creative art with definite, serene purpose, I had to overcome those reflections through themselves which had necessarily arisen in me, ardently absorbing their subject. Thus, this winter, I shall clear away everything entirely; free and light, without a burden, I shall enter a new world, into which I shall bring nothing save a happy artistic conscience."

Wagner thus had the intention of boldly, yet consciously, reaching out into fields untrodden before him, and if the "Ring" was to exemplify practically what he had been teaching theoretically, we may be sure that he paid as much attention to the language in which it was written as to the music.

In approaching our subject, we meet, at the outset, with one settled fact: that there is namely a vast difference between Wagner's general style, on the one hand, and that of his "Ring," on the other. One may read pages of this prose or even of his other poetry, and find nothing out of the ordinary, excluding, of course, such recurrent phrases and preferred constructions as are peculiar to every writer. But what a surprising change of language appears in the work here under consideration! How can this be explained? Nietzsche, in his book, "Richard Wagner in Beyruth," explains it with reference to music. "No one who ponders and reflects on Wagner the poet must forget that not one of his dramas has been designed to be read, hence they must not be burdened with those requirements which are demanded of the word-drama. The spectator receives every action of

<sup>1</sup> "Work and Mission of My Life," *supra*, article 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Briefwechsel*, November 25, 1850, i, 106.

a Wagnerian drama in a three-fold elucidation with highest perfection: in word, gesture and music, . . . hence the author could dispense with all those means which the 'word-poet' finds necessary to give his action warmth and power of illumination. Here rhetorical diffuseness can be concentrated into compactness and strength of rhetorical speech." Hans von Wolzogen<sup>1</sup> cites Nietzsche's views and accepts them without reservation. Alfred Ernst<sup>2</sup> translates the above quotation for his countrymen. Giving unrestricted assent to Nietzsche's view, he continues: "C'est la musique ici, non la parole, qui doit amplifier, prolonger, développer les significations avec une puissance que le drame parlé ne connaissait point jusque-là." Chamberlain<sup>3</sup> says: "The matter in question is not some 'beauty' of language, nor a more or less copious use of the spoken word; the decisive factor is the conceptional content of the language. Here arises the first bad misunderstanding. . . . In narration this language can be sparing, extremely determinative in characterization, and of great pregnancy in emotional precision, simply because it is connected with music." No one will deny that there is some justification for this opinion, but it does not go far enough, nor does it explain all the difficulties that appear. We are told over and over again not to separate the music from the text in considering the language of the work. The question, therefore, naturally arises: Is there no other test for Wagner's language in the "Ring"? Before proceeding further, we must remember what has been shown thus far, that not a single note had been written when the poem had already been printed and was in the hands of the author's friends. We have also seen that he even showed considerable reluctance about beginning the musical composition, having scored nothing for five full years. Doubtless his strong creative genius felt the spell of music while the poem was flowing from his pen, but to explain his language by music exclusively, and especially under such circumstances, is a poor appreciation of Wagner's technique. For a long time he was at a loss to find what may be called the missing link between poetry and music. What this was we shall pres-

<sup>1</sup> *Die Sprache in R. Wagner's Dichtungen.* Leipzig.

<sup>2</sup> *L'art de R. Wagner.* Paris, 1893, 65.

<sup>3</sup> *Das Drama R. Wagners,* Leipzig, 1892, 76 f.

ently see. His one desire was to move the emotions, and he reached the conclusion that neither the "word-drama" alone, nor music alone could do this, but that both in harmonious unity represent the highest achievement of dramatic art. Our personal conviction may not agree with him in this respect, nevertheless it is only fair and just to judge the man from the viewpoint of his own conceptions. It is true that he now discards, on the whole, our conventional poetic forms, he is convinced that poetry in itself is not enough, but must be assisted by a life-giving power. "The lyrics of Orpheus could not have brought the wild beasts to silence and peaceful devotion if he had only given them printed poems to read; their ears must be won over by the sympathetic voice of the heart, and their eyes, gluttonously spying about for prey, must be fascinated by the gracefully moving body of the singer, so that, unconsciously, they might behold in this man not an object for their appetite, but one worthy to be heard and seen before they were fit to give due attention to his moral teaching." Again: "When the Greeks ceased to sing and began to make history, they collected their songs in Homer; the same was true of the Germans, so that in the time of the Hohenstaufen their songs were collected in the *Nibelungenlied*. Likewise, we cannot conceive the '*Volkslied*' from any other viewpoint than that of song. To-day, all this is changed. What we have is poetry, fit only to be read silently, fit for the learned discussions of the critics, but not poetry which touches the emotions."<sup>1</sup> He ridiculed the so-called "*Lieder ohne Worte*:" "One needs words, poetry for music, but not our traditional poetry, because this refuses to fuse with music." Hence he sought for some other form, a form which answers all these purposes, and that form is the well-known device of *alliteration*, a device, however, which, as W. uses it, though peculiar, becomes a source of strength. This has already been called the missing link, and it is proposed to show that, from this viewpoint, Wagner's language in the "*Ring*" is to be explained and, in some of its phases, from this viewpoint alone. That this view is fundamentally correct, is made clear when "*Siegfried's Tod*," of 1848, is compared with the present "*Goetterdaemmerung*,"

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Werke*, iii, 123.

which, as has been shown, is the outcome of the former. In recasting it, various changes were made, the action was intensified, but most important for our argument are those changes of language which were made for the evident sake of alliteration. The first quotation of those which follow is always from "Siegfried's Tod," the second, from "Goetterdaemmerung."

deinem Rat nur zoll ich Lob.

deinem Rat nur red' ich Lob.—G. 15.

der dort so herrlich erwuchs,  
den wuensch ich Gudrun zum Mann.  
der im Walde so maechtig erwuchs,  
den wuensch ich . . . —G. 16.

welche Tat schuf es so hehr.  
welche Tat schuf er so tapfer.—G. 16.

vernahm ich, er huetet den reichsten Schatz.  
vernahm ich, er huetet den neidlichsten Schatz.—G. 17.

und Brunnhild gewaenne nur er,  
sie moechte kein an'drer bestehn.  
und Brunnhild gewaenne nur er,  
keinem and'ren wiehe die Brunst.—G. 17.

nun zeigst du boese Art . . . zwingen soll.  
was weckst du Zweifel und Zwist . . . zwingen soll.—G. 17.

gewaenne sie Siegfried fuer sich.  
braechte Siegfried die Braut dir heim.—G. 17.

in Jagens Lust am Rhein.  
in rastloser Jagt . . . Rhein.—G. 19.

ein selt'ner Schlag von muessiger Hand.  
ein gemaechlicher Schlag, etc.—G. 19.

so muehloser Kraft . . . Ruder.  
so ruestiger Kraft . . . Ruder.—G. 19.

den ersten Trunk zu treuer Minne, Bruennhild trink.  
den ersten Trunk zu treuer Minne, Bruennhild bring ich.—G. 23.

wohl gute Runen laesst mich ihr Auge lesen.  
sind's gute Runen, die ihrem Aug' ich entrate.—G. 23.

dort liegt mein Schiff, schnell bringt es zu Bruennhilds Felsen  
. . . Schnell fuehrt es zum Felsen.—G. 27.

eine Nacht am Ufer harrst du mein.  
eine Nacht . . . harrst du im Nachen.—G. 27.

wissen sollst du, welche Macht du hast.  
gemahnt sei der Macht, der du gebietest.—G. 40.

dich Unverzagten zeugt'.  
dich Zaglosen zeugt.—G. 42.

den Ring sollst du haben.  
den Ring sollst du haben, harre in Ruh.—G. 42.

der Tarnhelm wirkte das wie Hagen mich es wies.  
der Tarnhelm . . . wie Hagen es tuechtig wies.—G. 45.

im Fruehnebel vom Felsen folgte sie mir hinab.  
durch des Feuers verloeschende Lohe.  
im Fruehnebel vom Felsen folgte sie mir zu Tal.—G. 45.

Siegfried . . . wie fuercht ich mich vor dir.  
Siegfried . . . wie fasst mich Fureht vor dir.—G. 46.

du, Hagen, rufe die Mannen.  
. . . minnig rufe die Mannen.—G. 46.

einsam faehrt er mit ihr allein.  
einsam faehrt er, keiner folgt.—G. 48.

Hagen, was sollen wir dann.  
Hagen, was heissest du uns dann.—G. 48.

tranken wir aus, was treiben wir dann?  
das Horn zur Hand, wie halten wir es dann?—G. 49.

ihm, der zur Frau dich erkor.  
ihm, der zum Wieb dich gewann.—G. 50.

Welche Sorge mach' ich dir, Bruennhild.  
Was mueht Bruennhildens Blick.—G. 51.

merket wohl was die Frau euch klagt.  
merket klug was die Frau euch klagt.—G. 52.

zeigt Bruennhild wie ihr Herz sie zerbreche,  
den zu vernichten, der sie verriet.  
heisset Bruennhild ihr Herz zu zerbrechen,  
den zu zertruemmern, der sie betrog.—G. 54.

treulos, Siegfried, solltest du sein.  
treulos, Siegfried, saunst du auf Trug.—G. 55.

ein einz'ger Blick seines glaenzenden Auges.  
. . . Blick seines blitzenden Auges.—G. 59.

dein liches Aug' neideten dann wir nimmer.  
. . . liches Aug' . . . nicht laenger.—G. 66.

zu deinem Verderben wahrst du den Ring.  
zu deinem Wehe wahrst du den Ring.—R. 68.

ihr listigen Frauen lasset ab.  
ihr listigen Frauen lasset das frei.—G. 69.  
ihn flochten webende Nornen.  
. . . naechtlich webende Nornen.—G. 69.

Eide schwur er und weiss sie nicht.  
Eide . . . achtet er nicht.—G. 70.

Runen weiss er und kennt sie nicht.  
Runen . . . und raet sie nicht.—G. 70.

nur den Ring, der Tod ihm bringt,  
den Reif nur will er behalten.  
. . . Ring, der zum Tod ihm taugt,  
den Reif nur will er sich wahren.—G. 70.

hei, Gunther, ungemuter Mann.  
. . . Gunther, graemlicher Mann.—G. 73.

jetzt aber hoert Wunder,  
jetzt aber merkt wohl auf die Maehr.  
Wunder muss ich euch melden.—G. 74.

durchschritt er die Glut . . . Braut.  
. . . Brunst . . . Braut.—G. 76.

selig umschlang . . . Bruennhilde.  
bruenstig umschlang . . . Bruennhilde.—G. 76.

verstehst du auch dieser Raben Spruch.  
erraetst du auch dieser Raben Geraun.—G. 77.

schweigt euren Jammer, eure eitle Wut.  
schweigt eures Jammers jauchzenden Schwall.—G. 82.

If these and other changes support our statement that alliteration has influenced Wagner's language, we do not go too far in inferring that it has influenced the whole work even where we have no material for comparison. And here it may be noticed that it requires but little keenness of penetration to understand Wagner when he says that he could not use flowery phrases. "In frank emotion, when we let go all conventional consideration for the spun-out modern phrase, we try to express ourselves briefly and to the point, and, if possible, in one breath."<sup>1</sup> In his search for a strictly melodic garment for his

<sup>1</sup> *Werke, Oper und Drama*, translated by Ellis, ii, 256; cf., also, Part 3, chap. 2, and Part 2, chap. 6.



dialogue, it seemed clear to him that, through an imperfection of our modern verse, it was impossible to find in it a natural melodic source or a standard of musical expression. For this, however, he had not far to seek. "In that primal mythic spring where I found the fair young Siegfried I also lit, lead by his hand, upon the physically perfect mode of utterance wherein alone that man could speak his feelings. This was the alliterative verse, which bends itself into natural and lively rhythm to the actual accents of our speech, and yields itself so readily to every shade of manifold expression, that 'Stabreim' which 'the folk itself once sang when it was still both poet and myth-maker.'" He had also noticed that in alliteration "the roots are fitted to one another in such a way that, just as they sound alike to the ear, they also knit like objects into one collective image in which the feeling may utter its conclusions concerning them." In this connection, attention may be called to an analogy in Mhg. literature—the *Leich*. The secular *Leich* was undoubtedly sung with bodily motion. Ulrich von Lichtenstein reports that he sang his *Leich* with high notes and quick motion, for which many a fiddler thanked him. Several lays close when the fiddle string snaps, or the bow breaks.<sup>1</sup> Now in strict keeping with all this is the form of the *Leich*. It is impossible to go so far as Jakob Grimm<sup>2</sup> and to see even some sort of alliteration in it, but the poetic form stands in clear contradistinction to the Minnesong. There is a law in the *Leich*, though no one has yet been able to show just what it is. To some extent, a parallel is found in Wagner's work, for there, as in the *Leich*, we have a surprising freedom of action with striking irregularities of form. One merely needs to recall the old "Tanhäuser" and Wagner's study of it, as well as other parts of old German literature, to become convinced at once that he was influenced by it in a marked degree.<sup>3</sup> Speaking of his stay in Paris, he says: "There, in a foreign country, I was made acquainted with the folk-lore of my home land. I read 'Tanhäuser' and was intensely moved by

<sup>1</sup> F. Pfeiffer, *Deutsche Classiker des Mittelalters*, i, 164; Uhland, *Volkslieder*, Cotta Edition, iii, 245 f.

<sup>2</sup> J. Grimm, *Ueber den altdeutschen Meistergesang*, p. 63 f.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Oper und Drama*, where he speaks of the beauty of the Volkslied; cf., also, *Work and Mission of My Life*, *supra*, article 2.

its sympathetic-tragical character, especially as I found it in connection with the 'Saengerkrieg auf der Wartburg,' and I was led to anticipate the possibility of a great, intensely serious musical drama."

There is still another reason for Wagner's choice of alliteration. It was his desire to create primitive characters. We shall have occasion to note some of his compound words with the prefix "ur": *urweise*, *Urgesetz*, etc. He created "*Urmenschen*," and for this reason he did not follow the *Nibelungenlied*, but used old Norse for his sources. Here, too, he found the alliterative verse. There were, accordingly, three motives for Wagner's choice of alliteration: it leaves room for musical accent, it heightens emotion, it leads back to primitive conditions. These tendencies are the soul of his work, its body is the language with all its apparent peculiarities.

## CHAPTER II

### ALLITERATION

NOTHING definite has yet been written on Wagner's alliteration.<sup>1</sup> A few general remarks have been made by his friends, adverse criticism has discarded it with a sneer as unworthy of detailed consideration. It is interesting to note that some important critics have unrestricted praise for the poetry of the "Ring" but speak disdainfully of the alliteration; while others extol its merits and condemn the poem. Julian Schmidt calls it "Old-Frankonian twaddle;" Hanslik, "A frightfully short dog-trot;" and when "Parsifal" appeared, he was glad "to be rid of this childish tittle-tattle."<sup>2</sup> W. Jordan,<sup>3</sup> speaking of the translators of the Edda, says, "Those engaged in this enterprise had no apprehension of the far more vigorous conditions which alliteration had to fulfill in modern German, when, in place of delighting harmoniously, it racks the ear with its unbearable rattling, disgusts the æsthetic feeling with vulgarity, and shocks the reason with transgression against logic and language, as do some opera-texts of R. Wagner." Geo. Witkowski<sup>4</sup> thinks that the vast thought-content and the dramatic importance of the "Ring" place it in the domain of true elevated tragedy; but the freakish external form which applies alliteration with utter want of intelligence, the language which is intentionally antiquated and distorted by numberless word-plays, impair its dramatic value. Dr. Karl Koestlin, on the other hand, holds just the opposite view.<sup>5</sup> He sees no value in it from the viewpoint of

<sup>1</sup> Herrmann, *Wagner und der Strabreim*, which is called "Dilettantisch," in Paul's Grundriss, II Band, 2 Abt., p. 121, could not be got by the author.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. W. Tappert, *R. Wagner, sein Leben und seine Werke*, 1883.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Edda*, 2 Aufl., Frankfurt a. M., 1890, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Das Deutsche Drama des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, p. 100.

<sup>5</sup> *R. Wagner's Tondrama, Der Ring des Nibelungen*, p. 69.

tragedy, but has almost unlimited praise for it as a poem. "Indeed, the language of the poem represents a tremendous progress in contrast with all previous opera-texts, especially as to meter and rhythm. The quick succession of words and the short lines give the whole poem a buoyancy and swing which makes it ring and chime spontaneously, and which, when one has become accustomed to it, affords a genuine pleasure by the mere reading of it." He praises the force of expression which excludes all redundancy, the constant use of alliteration, which protects against languor and triviality of expression, and fits excellently into the heroic mood of the poem. A. Ernst<sup>1</sup> explains the modern *Stabreim*, describes the Edda and Simrock's translation of it, and shows how certain consonants predominate in certain passages. Excepting general hints, Ernst's otherwise excellent book adds nothing of importance to our subject. Karl Gjellerup<sup>2</sup> draws attention to the rimeless lines; he considers the old Norse *liódahátt*, but refutes the idea of regularity and correspondence with that movement. He points out a crescendo in Wagner's alliteration from a single consonant to groups of two, three, and even four: Saal:Sieg, Stock:Stein, Strahl:Strom, Strahl:Strafe. This exhausts his observations. Hans von Wolzogen<sup>3</sup> inveighs against Wagner's critics in characteristic manner and defends his alliteration. Following W. Jordan, he endeavors to prove that Wagner uses not only l, w, s, but all consonants. He calls Wagner's *liódahátt* an imitation of epic law, but contributes nothing new to the subject. The same is true of his "Poetische Lautsymbolik."<sup>4</sup> In this he starts out with the old theory that certain emotions are created by hearing certain sounds, and without further difficulty, he reaches the theory of onomatopoeia, which, on the whole, he accepts. With this as a basis, he traverses the whole "Ring" and proves for Wagner what the latter himself surely never wished to prove. Though the theory may be plausible, it becomes ridiculous when applied to the poem

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, chapitre IV, La langue poétique, la metrique, p. 59 f.

<sup>2</sup> R. Wagner i hans Hovevaerk, *Nibelungs Ring*, p. 231.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Tragoedie in Bayreuth und ihr Statyrspiel*, Leipzig, Schloemp, 1877; reprinted by the same press, 1878, under new title: *Erlaeuterungen zu R. Wagner's Nibelungendrama*, p. 51 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Poetische Lautsymbolik, psychische Wirkungen der Sprachlaute im Stabreime*,

line for line. Thus, "n" is the surly sound, because Alberich uses it: "ihr Nicker, wie seid ihr niedlich, niedliches Volk," and because the dwarf symbolizes the negative spirit (p. 8). "t" represents the "direction whither," hence it is the demonstrative consonant, for does it not occur in the following? "Tauche zur Tiefe mit dumpfem Gedonner" (p. 9). "w" is soft, for it is used in "woge du Welle, walle zur Wiege"—"Winterstuerme wichen dem Wonnemond." Wolzogen does not seem to consider that "w" is also used in "wild wiehert Walvaters Ross; wehe, wehe, wuetend schwingt sich Woten zu Ross." "Pr" is the sound of spontaneous movement, especially that of sneezing and ridicule, hence physical and psychic relationship; for the Rhinedaughter says: "pruhstend naht meines Freiers Pracht" (p. 8).

It is not necessary to go into this further. It does not solve the problem of Wagner's method of alliteration. It is not to be understood, however, that no attempt is made in the poem at sound-coloring, which is a matter at once distinct from this psychic relationship of sounds. One other critic, Edmund von Hagen,<sup>1</sup> makes only a few general remarks on Wagner's *Stabreim*, drawing attention to *Schleicher's* admiration of it.

All these divergent views show that there is no unanimity of opinion with regard to the verse technique of Wagner the poet. It may be that there never will be, but the conditions at hand, and the importance which the poet himself has attached to alliteration, call for an analysis upon which the further consideration of our subject may be developed. At the outset, it is necessary to show whence Wagner derived his conception of the *Stabreim*. He could not read the Edda in the original, but he had intimate intercourse with a scholar who could, one of the first who made a complete alliterative translation into German, Ludwig Ettmueller.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to prove how much personal influence Ettmueller had on Wagner's conception of alliteration, though both lived in Zuerich; we know, however, that he used his translation copiously, and the introduction to his book throws light on many details of our subject. The book also

<sup>1</sup> *Ueber die Dichtung der ersten Scene des Rheingolds*, Muenchen, 1876, p.76.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Lieder der Edda von den Nibelungen, Stabreimende Verdeutschung nebst Erlaeuterungen*, Zuerich, Orell, Fuessli und Co., 1837.

contains a bibliography of translations and works on the Edda and the sagas, at the time, meagre enough. These we know Wagner perused studiously, notably von der Hagen's translation: "Die Eddalieder von den Nibelungen," 1814, and "Lieder der alten Edda," 1815. The brothers Grimm, shortly after that, edited thirteen songs in the original Old Norse with a double translation, one literal, the other in prose. W. Mueller's "Versuch einer mythologischen Erklärung der Nibelungensage," 1841, has left distinct traces in Wagner's work. Aside from the treatise as such, the copious foot-notes gave him manifold suggestions which he worked up. Words, such as *Waberlohe* (p. 5), *das Gold bergen* (p. ii), etc., are repeatedly used by Wagner, to say nothing of the treatment of the material itself, which does not belong here. But of the greatest importance for our subject is that part of Ettmueller's introduction where he explains alliteration. He confesses that it is not his own, but merely an extract from Rask's *Islandic Metrics*. In 1851, while Wagner was yet busily engaged with his poem, Simrock's alliterative translation of the Edda made its appearance,<sup>1</sup> and we know that Wagner had a copy of it. It is, accordingly, evident that he had acquainted himself with the best results of the German scholarship of the time in these directions.

Ettmueller's introduction treats alliteration in a very elementary manner. He gives these very general rules: 1. Lines which belong together must have three alliterative words, two of them in the first line, one in the second. The foot-note explains that frequently, and especially in short lines, only two such words are used, one in each line. 2. The *liódahátt* has three lines, a couplet, which is united by alliteration, and a third line which alliterates within itself. Then he states that both types sometimes interchange in the same song, or even in the same strophe. Ettmueller himself transgresses against these laws, notably that which demands the alliteration on the word bearing the main stress:

Dann wird deren Sohn dein Leid raechen. (II Sigurdli., 11.)

His two commonest forms are:

---

<sup>1</sup> K. J. Simrock, *Edda Saemunder, die juengere und aeltere Edda nebst den mythischen Erzählungen der Skalda*.

2:1 rote Ringe als Rache des Vaters. (II Sig., 15.)

1:1 sass dann mit Tora sieben Halbjahre. (II Sig., 18.)

In his *liódaháttir*, Ettmueller takes considerable license:

a a bb

der Maenner Schwarm schwer das raecht  
der in Wadgelmir wadet. (II Sig., 4.)

aa a bb

ungeboren noch acht ich die Edlinge seien  
welchen das zum Hasse verhaengt ist. (II Sig., 8.)

a a bbb

dein Drohn keinen Deut fuercht ich  
nun hebt euch heim von hinnen. (II Sig., 9.)

Old Norse, of course, did not tie itself down to inflexible rules.<sup>1</sup>

The same conditions are found in Simrock's translation:

aa a bb

leicht erkennen koennen die zu Odhin kommen  
den Saal wenn sie ihn sehn. (Grimmismal, 9.)

*Cf.*, also, Hawamal, 10; Wafthrudnismal, 51; Skirnisfoer, 10, etc. Simrock has no instances of two alliterative words in the second half of the first line, but other peculiarities are to be pointed out. Thus, in Hawamal, 54, there is an example where in one case the third line corresponds with the second half of the first:

der Mann muss maessig weise sein  
doch nicht allzuweise,

and in the other case it corresponds with the first half of the first line:

des Weisen Herz erheitert sich selten  
wenn er zu weise wird.

The application of all this appertains to Wagner, although his problem was different in some respects. The fact that his purpose was to write a drama is a distinctive feature which must never be overlooked; his very intention had to lead him in paths of his own. The Edda is lyric, the songs are divided into strophes, built on preconceived law. We have seen how perplexed Wagner was to find a method by which all this could be utilized for dramatic poetry. The Edda could give him only hints at best, the rest was a problem which he had to solve alone, since there were no real models from which he could copy. The same

<sup>1</sup>*Cf.* Sievers, *Altgermanische Metrik*, p. 83.

difficulty confronted him with the old epic *Langzeile*. Jordan could use it and show how he applied it in comparison with the old literature,<sup>1</sup> and others could do this task for him;<sup>2</sup> but what could Wagner do with it? The rhapsodist may wax warm in repeating these lines, Wagner felt that they could not be sung. To be sure, the latter used the *málaháttir* and *liódaháttir* movement, but with almost infinite variations; he binds four, five, six and even seven lines, so that either by crossing, or by predominance of identical sound they make a unit in themselves. These types are distributed at random throughout the whole work. A few analogies can be found even in the Edda. But when everything is said, when analogies and comparisons of such works which Wagner used are pointed out, the result remains, that in its actual outcome his alliteration is a work of his own. The following analysis may illustrate this remark:

#### I. THE COUPLET

1:1 This type predominates.

soll ich dir glauben so gleite herab—R. 11.

2:1 This type is very familiar; in fact, it predominates in the old *Langzeile*. As a rule, Wagner correctly gives the third alliteration the greatest stress:

nur tiefer tauche willst du mir taugen—R. 10.

A peculiarity worthy of notice, however, is the fact that this type is very sparingly used in the "Ring." R. has 23, W. 42, S. 41, G. 29 instances. This is a surprising difference when compared with the preceding type. There R. alone contains 39 instances more than the entire work taken together here: R. 174; here all together 135.

1:2 This is unusual everywhere; when found, it is an exception. Chamisso, "Das Lied vom Thrym," has one instance:

und er erreichte der Riesen Reich,

but Wagner uses it almost as much as the preceding type: R. 19, W. 24, S. 38, G. 14, in all 95 instances.

gefall ich dir nicht dich fass ich doth fest—R. 10.

1:3 Of this the "Ring" contains only three instances:

<sup>1</sup>*Der epische Vers der Germanen und sein Strabreim*, Frankfurt a. M., 1868.

<sup>2</sup>R. Roepe, *Die moderne Nibelungendichtung*, Hamburg, 1869.



dem Tode verfallen fessle den Feigen die Furcht—R. 62.  
 fuer Mueh und Last erlauert ich lang meinen Lohn—S. 62.  
 der Gibichungen Geschlecht gaben die Goetter ihm Gunst—G. 50.

2:2 There are only 24 instances of this type in the whole book: R. 6, W. 6, S. 10, G. 2.

wir beide bauten Schlummers bar die Burg—R. 24.

Aside from these types, there are a few very unusual ones:

2:3

wer so die Wehrlose weckt,  
 dem ward, erwacht sie, zum Weib—W. 83.

3:2

zur Hoehle half ich ihr her  
 am warmen Herd sie zu hueten—S. 15.

3:1

loes ich mir Leib und Leben  
 den Ring auch muss ich mir Loesen—R. 59.

Before going over to the other large category of the couplet, it is necessary to point out such defective ones which have alliteration in one line only, 2:0, 0:2, or none at all, 0:0. Of 2:0 there are 5, of 0:2 there are 2, and of 0:0 there are 16 instances in the whole book, but a few of these may be connected with preceding lines.

2:0

fort mit der Faust der Ring ist mein—R. 71; *cf.* S. 16, 60; G. 24, 57.

0:2

gruesst mich in Wallhall froh eine Frau—W. 50; *cf.* W. 65.

0:0

ich Armer zagte dass noch was fehle—R. 41; *cf.* R. 47, 55; W. 58, 83;  
 S. 14, 16, 19, 55, 61, 68, 72, 97; G. 19, 41, 80.

It is now necessary to examine those couplets in which alliteration changes consonants. These comprise almost 26 per cent. of all the couplets in our work, and form the three well-known categories: abab, abba, aabb. In the last category the two lines of the couplet might be separated and each called an isolated line, because from the viewpoint of alliteration they are separated rather than bound together. The only tie in the following couplet is its grammatical connection; alliteration has nothing to do with its unity:

tief in des Busens Berge  
 glimmt nur noch lichtlose Glut—W. 17.

Under these conditions, the ultimate end of alliteration is destroyed; its use is, strictly speaking, a transgression against the laws of alliteration, which is magnified by the fact Wagner has as many of this type as of either of the two others. *abab* has 178, *abba* has 156, *aabb* has 173 instances, 507 in all. But in all justice it must be stated that the translators, and even Jordan, who is punctilious in such matters, use this type; Minor, in his "Neuhochdeutsche Metrik," p. 343, and others sanction it. Wagner's couplet, aside from the three forms just mentioned, has 89 exceptions with 30 various forms. These, added to 507 mentioned above, give a total of 596, making about one per cent. exceptions. Some of these variations show only one instance to a type, but they are there and increase the percentage, small as it is.

*abab*

wie gleicht er dem Weibe der gleissende Wurm.—W. 9.

This is the standard form, but notice the following two, where, in the first example, the first line has three alliterations, the second line only one, the type, however, being preserved. In the second example this condition is reversed: one alliteration in the first line, three in the second:

liess sie's als schwachen Lohn,  
sieh her, ein zerbrochenes Schwert.—S. 18.  
kehre dich um,  
aus der Hoehle kommt er daher.—S. 65.

No special category has been made of these, because the number of examples is exceedingly small.

*abba*

Of this category, R. has 33, W. 46, S. 50, G. 27, 156 in all. Here, too, we notice that alliteration is not equally distributed within the two lines of the couplet. The first quotation following is an example of the regular, the second of the irregular form, of which, however, there are only ten examples in all.

holder Sang singt zu mir her.—R. 11.  
Freia von je knausernd die koestliche Frucht.—R. 38.

*aa bb*

Here, again, we have irregular distribution, 24 instances in all. One may suffice:

durch die Fluten hin fiesst sein strahlender Stern.—R. 14.

Of the others, R. has 45, W. 41, S. 51, G. 36; 173 in all. Here follows an example of the regular form:

schein ich nicht schoen dir niedlich und neckisch.—R. 11.

## EXCEPTIONS

It is of importance to treat these more fully than the regular forms, since a proper survey of these is the only means for ascertaining Wagner's ability or license. Each of these couplets, of course, must contain more than four alliterations, but none contains more than six. Of the thirty types referred to above, 12 have five, 18 have six alliterations. They are treated here from the viewpoint of this division.

1. *Five Alliterated Words*

aba ab

faend ich den heiligen Freund  
umfieng den Helden mein Arm.—W. 19, *cf.* G. 9.

aa bba

nun halt ich was mich erhebt  
der Maechtigen maechtigsten Herrn.—R. 61; *cf.* W. 27, 29; S. 67;  
G. 40.

aab ab

glaenzet von Gold noch ein Ring  
den gebt die Ritze zu fuellen.—R. 67; *cf.* W. 6, 15, 28, 33; G. 33, 42;  
R. 13.

ab bab

so leicht waehntest du  
Wonne der Liebe erworben.—W. 79; *cf.* G. 7.

ab baa

glaub' mir mehr als Freia  
frommt das gleissende Gold.—R. 35; *cf.* G. 74.

ab aab

lehret nur Schlaueit und List  
wie Loge verschlagen sie uebt.—R. 23; *cf.* R. 26, 61; S. 9; G. 16, 74.

aba ba

nur rastloern Sturm zu erregen  
erstand dir die ragende Burg.—R. 21; *cf.* W. 53, 62, 76; G. 7, 31, 85.

aaa bb

viel Schlimmes schuf er uns schon  
doch stets bestriekt er uns wieder.—R. 23; *cf.* R. 33, 15, 16, 76; W. 19,  
37, 38, 40, 81; S. 33, 34, 37; G. 26.

aab bb

entzog ich zaglos das Schwert  
seine Schneide schmecke jetzt du.—W. 57; cf. S. 6.

ab bba

bei dem braunen Waelsung  
weilt wohl noch Bruennhild.—W. 62.

## 2. *Six Alliterated Words*

### (a) Crossing Between Two Consonants

aaa bbb

kuehn ist des Kindes Kraft  
scharf schneidet sein Schwert.—S. 49.

aba aab

o lachend frevelnder Leichtsinn  
lieblosester Frohmüt.—R. 20.

Cf. aab bba, W. 57; aba bab, W. 43; G. 74; abb aba, R. 36;  
aba baa, G. 17; aba bbb, S. 12, 74; W. 16, 56, 81; G. 29, 36.

### (b) Crossing Between Three Consonants.

aba ccb

dass ein Weib der Zwerg bewaeltigt  
des Gunst Gold ihm erzwang.—W. 42.

abc abc

sank auf die Lider mir Nacht  
die Sonne lacht mir nun neu.—W. 7; cf. S. 98, G. 35.

Cf. aab bcc, W. 15, 73; S. 6; aba bcc, R. 22; abc cab, G. 65;  
abc acb, R. 74; abb acc, R. 9, 28, 62; W. 47; G. 70, 74; abb cca,  
R. 57; aab cbc, R. 28, 33; aab ccb, R. 71; G. 6; aba cbc, W. 75;  
abc cba, W. 79.

### *Vocalic Alliteration in the Couplet*

Here we have two classes; first, purely vocalic throughout; second, mixed with consonantal alliteration. Of the first class there are 48 instances: R. 2, W. 20, S. 15, G. 11; of the second, 67: R. 19, W. 18, S. 7, G. 23; both classes together, 114.

(1) *Vocalic Throughout*. Most of these are type 1:1.

am wenigsten er der lusterne Alp,

but 2:2 occurs occasionally:

der ewigen Goetter Ende daemmert ewig da auf,

and even such types as 3:2 are found:

den alten albern Alp des Aergers haett ich ein End.

(2) *Mixed alliteration.* Let "c" stand for consonantal, "v" for vocalic. All possible positions occur here:

cv cv rettēt auch es rast der Alp  
 ve ve ihr andern harrt bis Abend hir  
 ve cv auch mueht ich mich um den Alben  
 cv ve nehmt euch in Acht Alberich naht  
 vv cc Immer ist Undank Loges Lohn  
 cc vv was Rechtes ich je riet andern duenkte es arg

Then we find eight instances where five and six alliterations are used:

cvv cc wie schlau fuer Ernst du achtest  
 was wir zum Scherz nur beschlossen.—R. 25.

Cf. vv cve, G. 6; vev vv, W. 38; vev ve, R. 20; eve ve, W. 75; vev ccc, G. 31; ccc vev, G. 40; ev cve, G. 49.

## II. THE TRIPLET.

This is frequently, though not exclusively, used in short dialogues: W. 64, the valkyries speaking to one another; S. 65, 62, 81 f, the dialogues between Siegfried and Mime, Siegfried and Alberich and Wanderer. The scheme appearing most frequently (255 times out of a possible 723), almost one-third of the whole number, is a a bb, *e. g.*, each of the two first lines has one alliteration, the third has two:

warum du Banger bandest du nicht  
 das Maedchen, das du nimmst.—R. 13.<sup>1</sup>

ab ab cc

Here alliteration is intensified; instead of four, there are six alliterated words, the first and the second of the second line corresponding to the first and second of the first line, the third line alliterating within itself.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R. 13, 18, 20, 21, 22 (2), 23 (3), 25, 31, 33, 34, 37, 39 (2), 42 (2), 49, 50 (2), 58 (2), 59 (2), 60, 62, 63, 69 (3), 70, 71, 72; W. 6, 13, 15, 18 (3), 19 (2), 21 (4), 22, 24 (2), 26, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 (2), 36 (2), 37, 41, 46, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53 (2), 55, 56 (2), 58, 61, 65, 66, 68, 69, 72, 78 (2), 80 (2), 82, 84 (4); S. 8, 11 (3), 13 (4), 14 (3), 15 (3), 20 (2), 21, 22 (1), 23 (1), 24 (4), 25 (2), 26 (2), 27 (3), 29 (2), 30, 31, 34 (3), 35 (5), 36 (2), 37 (2), 38, 39 (2), 40 (2), 45 (3), 46 (2), 47 (2), 48, 49 (2), 53, 54 (2), 56, 57 (3), 58 (2), 60, 62, 67, 68 (4), 69 (2), 70, 71 (3), 72, 73, 74 (2), 75, 76, 78, 79 (2), 81 (2), 82, 84 (2), 88 (3), 91, 92 (2), 94 (2), 96 (3); G. 8 (3), 9 (2), 10, 12, 17, 18, 22, 23, 25, 27 (2), 30, 33, 34, 35, 37, 40, 41 (2), 44 (2), 46, 48, 57, 58, 59 (2), 60, 61, 64, 65, 68, 69 (2), 70, 71, 72, 75, 76 (3), 77, 78, 80, 82, 83, 84, 85.

stark und schoen steht er zur Schau  
 hehrer herrlicher Bau.—R. 20.

This class is small, only fifteen examples were found. Cf. R. 23 (2), 63, 73; S. 7, 22, 26, 35, 49, 66; G. 7, 9, 34, 78.

ab ba cc

This type is also small in number, the second line begins as the first ends, the third line standing for itself:

Hort und Ring erringt er im Harst  
 wie erwerb ich mir den Gewinn.—S. 33.

Notice the triple alliteration in the third line in the following:

von Menschen verlacht verlustig der Macht  
 giengen wir Goetter zu Grund.—W. 35.

Cf. R. 19, 25, 32, 57, 70 (2); W. 14, 21, 56, 73, 80; S. 25 (2), 46, 47, 55, 57, 71, 76; G. 6, 8, 26, 75, 76, 84.

aa bb cc

Each line stands for itself, with no reference to its surrounding:

gleiche Gier war Fricka wohl fremd  
 als selbst um den Bau sie mich bat.—R. 21.

Cf. R. 38, 51; W. 34, 38, 56; S. 23, 27, 37, 46, 68, 72; G. 8, 26, 37, 42, 69.

(1) aa a bb and (2) a aa bb. Only a few of these are found:  
 Of (1):

neue Neidtat sinnt uns der Niblung  
 gibt das Gold ihm Macht.—R. 32.

Cf. R. 36, 50, 64, 74; W. 52, 66; S. 11, 28, 36, 37, 52, 73, 81, 97; G. 40.

Of (2):

die liebliche Goettin licht und leicht  
 was taugt euch Toelpeln ihr Reiz.—R. 25.

Cf. W. 18, 62; S. 31, 36, 47, 60; G. 11, 31.

It is necessary to state that not all triplets correspond to the types just cited. Wagner occasionally allows himself liberties, but they are so few in number that they might be reasonably overlooked were we not endeavoring to give an exhaustive survey of the matter. They are not only few, but so far apart in the text that it requires special care to detect them. Most of these types appear only once.

ab ab ab

Wut und Minne wild und maechtig  
 wuehlt mir den Mut auf.—R. 13.

aa aa bb

wer sie erweckte wer sie gewaenne  
machtlos macht er mich ewig.—S. 85.

aaa a bb

mich Dummen duenkte mich das bedenken will ich's  
wer weiss was ich tu.—R. 75.

a a bbb

das Rheingold raubte mir Alberich  
weisst du was aus ihm ward.—G. 9.

aa bb ccc

mich musste der Reinste verraten  
dass wissend wuerde ein Weib.—G. 84.

aab cb c

bleib fern fuerchte dies Zeichen zur Schande zwingst du mich nicht  
so lang der Ring mich beschuetzt.

Identical alliteration. There are 101 examples of triplets in which the three lines are identical. This is about one-seventh of the whole number of triplets. S. contains 46 of these, almost one-half. The following is taken from S. 62; for a similar passage, cf. W. 74.

wohin schleichst du eilig und schlau  
schlimmer Gesell.<sup>1</sup>

Interlacing. The result of our study can be grouped into the following types:

(1) The third line alliterates with the second. This cannot be subdivided. One would have to cite almost every instance, which would serve no purpose. A few taken from R. may find a place here, with the assurance that W., S. and G. show the same condition:

keiner kennt ihn doch einer uebt ihn leicht  
der sel'ger Lieb entsagt  
schweige Schwaetzer Freia die gute  
Freia gilt es zu loesen.

(2) The third line alliterates with the first. Naturally this class is small. It occurs exclusively in short lines: if it were otherwise, alliteration would hardly be felt:

<sup>1</sup>Cf. R. 12, 40, 46, 48, 49 (3), 50 (2), 51, 51, 56, 57, 58, 62, 63, 71, 73, 76; W. 32, 37, 52 (2), 53, 65, 67, 73 (2), 74 (4), 75, 78, 85; S. 6 (2), 7, 11, 12, 14 (2), 19 (2), 21, 23, 24 (2), 25, 26, 33, 34, 53, 54 (2), 56, 57, 64 (2), 67, 73, 76 (2), 78, 79 (3), 81 (2), 82, 85 (2), 90 (3); G. 17, 20, 24, 28 (4), 30, 34, 35, 40, 46, 57 (3), 61, 65, 67, 69, 73, 76.

zur leckenden Lohē mich wieder zu wandeln  
spuer ich lockende Lust.—R. 75.

(3) The three lines interlace:

war es so schmaehlich was ich verbrach  
dass mein Verbrechen so schmaehlich du bestrafst.—W. 76.

*Cf.* R. 41, 44, 46, 58, 70; W. 7, 77; S. 14, 17, 37, 40, 52, 53, 54,  
58, 82, 84, 85, 91, 92, 94, 97; G. 45, 66, 67, 69, 71, 80, 81.

*Vocalic Alliteration in the Triplet*

Of purely vocalic alliteration, only one instance was found:  
wie sie zu enden lehre mich Erda  
zu ihr muss ich hinab.—R. 72.

Vocalic and consonantal mixed appears 49 times out of a possible 723.

(1) Vocalic in first two lines, consonantal in the third:

doch ihr setzet alles auf das juengende Obst  
das wussten die Riesen wohl.—R. 39.

(2) Consonantal in first two lines, vocalic in the third:

hilf mir Froh Freias Schmach  
eil ich zu enden.

(3) Vocalic and consonantal interlacing:

He! an die Arbeit alle von hinnen  
hurtig hinab.—R. 47.

*Cf.* R. 58, 59, 65, 72, 74; W. 21, 28 (3), 30, 33, 35, 36, 39, 41,  
46, 66, 81; S. 12, 15, 17, 21, 26, 33, 39, 56, 69, 79, 84, 91; G. 7,  
21, 26, 33, 34, 44, 57, 70, 72, 77, 82, 85.

*Defective Triplets*

These can be visualized thus:

(1) First half of first line has no connection:

an dem Blick erkennt ihn sein Kind  
schon wollt ich beim Namen ihn nennen.—W. 24.

(2) Third line without connection:

aus dem Wald fort in die Welt ziehn  
nimmer kehr ich zurueck.—S. 18; *cf.* G. 37, 66.

III. FOUR LINES CONNECTED

There are 102 instances where four lines must be taken together; 93 are purely consonantal, two purely vocalic and seven mixed. These must not be considered as double couplets; they form some grammatical entity, and for that reason seem justified.



Their distribution among the four parts of the "Ring" is as follows: R. 14, W. 32, S. 34, G. 13. Aside from the grammatical consideration just referred to, it may not be amiss to state that a further reason for putting them together in this analysis lies in the fact that either the third line binds the first, or there is some other prominent feature showing that they belong together. Where such features were found, it was deemed justifiable to bring them under the following types:

(1) Identical alliteration throughout:

den *Ring* den er schuf entriss ich ihm listig  
doch nicht dem *Rhein* gab ich ihn zurueck.—W. 37.

*Cf.* W. 72, 83; S. 21, 50, 66; G. 42.

(2) The third line binds the second:

so ohne Scham verschenkt ihr *Frechen*  
*Freia* mein holdes Geschwister froh des Schaechergewerks.—R. 21.

*Cf.* R. 29, 68, 71, 73; W. 8, 30, 32, 44, 48; S. 39, 45, 51, 88; G. 83, 85.

(3) The third line binds the first:

sitz ich *daheim* in Fleiss und Schweiss  
nach *Herzenslust* schweifst du umher. S. 10; *cf.* R. 22, S. 93.

(4) The third line binds the second with a new element in the third and fourth:

von des Rheines Gold hoert ich *raunen*  
*Beute-Runen* berge sein roter Glanz.—R. 33.

*Cf.* R. 50, 63; W. 11, 20, 21, 29, 38, 43, 50, 68, 81, 84; S. 7, 18, 23, 29, 60, 84, 85, 89, 90; G. 18, 40, 52, 53, 68.

(5) The first three lines alike; the fourth alliterates within itself:

Alberich zauderte nicht zaglos gewann er  
des Zaubers Macht geraten ist ihm der Ring.—R. 34.

*Cf.* R. 44, 48; W. 50, 66, 70, 82; S. 38, 75, 78.

(6) The first line alliterates within itself; the three following are alike:

der entgegen dem Gott fuer mich foechte  
den freundlichen Feind wie faende ich ihn.—W. 40; *cf.* W. 14.

(7) Repetition:

gegen der Goetter Rache reizte kuehn ich ihn auf  
gegen der Goetter Rache schuetzt ihn nun einzig das Schwert.—W. 41.

*Cf.* W. 14, 25, 73, 74, 81; S. 19, 56, 99; G. 61 (2).

(8) Unclassified types:

(a) The first and third, the second and fourth lines are bound together:

jagt er auf Taten wonnig umher  
zum engen Tann wird ihm die Welt.—G. 19.

(b) All lines alike but the third:

juengst kehrte er heim in der Hand hielt er  
seines Speeres Splitter die hatte ein Held ihm geschlagen.—G. 32.

(c) The fourth line binds the first:

so musste ich dich fassen um was zu wissen  
gutwillig erfahr ich doch nichts.—S. 15.

(d) The second line binds all the rest:

zu der mich nun Sehnsucht zieht die mit suessem Zauber mich sehrt  
im Zwange haelt sie den Mann der mich wehrlosen hoeht.—W. 16.

#### IV. FIVE LINES CONNECTED

Twenty-two examples of this category have been found. The various types do not differ very much from the forms treated above.

(1) Identical alliteration throughout:

fuer des Knaben Zucht will der knick'rige  
schaebige Knecht keek und kuehn  
wohl gar Koenig nun sein.—S. 63; cf. 32, 64 (3), 65.

(2) First four lines identical, the fifth alliterates within itself, with a new element introduced in the fourth:

ob alles fest forschet' ich genau  
Fasolt und Fafner fand ich bewaehrt  
kein Stein wankt im Gestaemm.—R. 29; cf. R. 41; S. 52, 94, 98.

(3) The first line alliterates within itself; the four following are identical, changing off with two consonants:

wie erraeng ich den Ring verfluchte Klemme  
da kleb ich fest faend ich nicht klugen Rat  
wie den Tarnhelm selbst ich bezwaeng.—S. 36.

(4) The third line binds the two last with the first two:

wo weilst du Wotan winkt dir nicht hold  
die hehre Burg die des Gebieters  
gastlich bergend nun harrt.—R. 72; cf. 12, 44; R. 15.

(5) The fourth line binds the last to the first three:

Weh! wuetend schwingt sich  
Wotan zu Ross hierher rast  
sein raechender Schritt.—W. 71; cf. S. 79, G. 35.

(6) The second binds the fourth line:

so ruestiger Kraft in des Ruders Schwung  
 ruehmt sich nur der der den Wurm erschlug  
 Siegfried ist es.—G. 19.

- (7) The third binds the fifth line by repetition:

ewig war ich ewig bin ich  
 ewig in suess sehnender Wonne  
 doch ewig zu deinem Heil.—S. 95.

- (8) The first line has no connection with its surroundings:

im kuehlen Schatten rauscht ein Quell  
 Weisheit raunend rann sein Gewell  
 da sang ich heiligen Sinn.—G. 6.

#### V. SIX LINES CONNECTED

This category is naturally small; only nine examples are found. Four of these connect both halves in the third line:

das Grieseln und Grauen das Gluehen und Schaudern  
 Hitzen und Schwindeln Haemmern und Beben  
 gern beghr ich das Bangen sehnend verlangt mich der Lust.—S33.  
*Cf.* R. 24, 31, 33.

In two cases, the fourth is the connecting line:

verfluchtes Licht was flammt dort die Luft  
 was flackert und lackert was flimmert und schwirrt  
 was schwebt dort und webt und wabert umher.—S. 29, *cf.* S. 71.

There is no identical alliteration in this category, but one consonant (l) runs throughout the passage with another (w) sounding like an undertone and creating a charming effect. It is Loge's complaint, R. 31:

doch so weit Leben und Weben verlacht nur ward  
 meine fragende List in Wasser, Erd und Luft,  
 lassen will nichts von Lieb und Weib.

In W. 54, a repetition in the third line binds the whole passage together:

dies Schwert das dem Treuen ein Trugvoller schuf  
 dies Schwert—etc. The same is found in S. 99:  
 und das Fuerchten ach, das ich nie gelernt  
 das Fuerchten das, etc.

In one passage, S. 76, we have almost identical alliteration; the fifth line justifies the sixth:

mich Wissende selbst bezwang ein Waltender einst  
 ein Wunschnaechden gebar ich Wotan  
 der Helden Wahl hiess fuer sich er sie kuehren.

## VI. SEVEN LINES CONNECTED.

There are six passages of seven lines each which cannot be reduced to smaller types. Four of these have identical alliteration throughout. The first is the well-known beginning of *R.*, the constantly recurring "w," indicating the soft movements of the waters:

weia waga    woge du Welle, etc.—*R.* 5; *cf.* 52, 69; *W.* 85.

As an example of repetition the following is interesting:

so gruesse mir Wallhall    gruesse mir Wotan

gruesse mir Waelse    und alle Helden, etc.—*W.* 51.

The foregoing analysis shows the multiplicity of Wagner's forms and the variations of each. But there is still another feature which must not be overlooked—the close position of the alliterated words. To show this, two categories have been made, the proximate and approximate position. The first gives all passages where an alliterated word follows directly upon the preceding one; the second, those separated by not more than two words.

## I. PROXIMATE POSITION

Woglinde wachst, Wellgunde waer, niedlich neidisch, Nacht naht, was willst, Holder hoerst, nah noch, haariger hoeckriger, Kind kalter, Sang singt, traut betrog, Banger bandst, gluehender Glanz, Spiele spenden, Wassertiefe wonnigen, Schmuck schmaechte, maaslos Macht, Minne Macht, Liebe Lust, Zauber zum, Brunst brannte, hehrer herrlicher, fertig verfallen, hehre Halle, Sold Sorge, Scham verschenkt, gleiche Gier, Wohnung wonniger, Burg gebunden, liebeloser leidigster, Weibes Wert, toerig tadelst, Gute geb, drueben drohte, stets bestriekt, boesen Bund, schloss Schlaf, beide bauten, schlankes Schloss, holde Holda, Riese raet, Weibes Wonne, Plumpen plagen, Gewinn werben, Haft hilft, schwach schwinden, du da, dringst du, Kampf kiesten, Lohnes Last, Hammers Heft, Handel haett, Wotans Wunsch, fest forschet, Loges Lohn, Manne maechtiger, Wotan wenden loeste Loge, selbst siehst, schlaue entschluempfte, etc.

## II. APPROXIMATE POSITION

Wie du wachst, umschlaenge der Schlanken, Furcht der Feind, ward mir was, Grund da greifst, Sprung den Sproeden, verliebt

und luestern, glauben so gleite, Trug ihr treulos, laechelt in lichten, Futen hin fliesst, Lust wie lachst, weil ich im Wag, flimmert der Fluss, Bade dein Bett, schweigt ihr schwazendes, lebt will lieben, Welterbe gewaenn, Liebe doch listig, Flut so verfluch, Gipfel die Goetterburg, Wille ihn wiess, Burg mir bangt, Vertrag dem Truge, harten doch heilig, Maenner nach Macht, Fricka wohl fremd, Wehr und Wall, Wandel und Wechsel, liebt wer lebt, Hilfe dort her, freier Mut frommt, Neid zum Nutz, rasch die riefen, Schwaehler die Schwache, bar die Burg, Leute den Lohn, Verrat am Vertrag, Lichtsohn du leicht, hoer und huete, uns freie zum Frieden, taugt euch Toelpeln, Weib zu gewinnen, schuetzt die Schoene, Haus und Herd, Haus und Hof, steht nun stark, red und rate, Bauer der Burg, zahlt er zoegernd, nichts gezoegert rasch gezahlt, Winkel der Welt, den Riesen wohl recht, zu muten dem Mann, etc.

In both cases the examples are taken from R, and only to page 31. They show, without a doubt, that Wagner consciously, and in some cases laboriously, looked for an accumulation of alliteration. All this could not have been without definite influence upon the vocabulary and syntax of his language. This, however, was not the only influence, as will be shown in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER III

### THE VOCABULARY

WAGNER'S vocabulary deserves particular attention. As time goes on, he is better understood, and, compared with other authors, our day is too late for a serious defence. The following pages are not written with the view of justifying the use of certain words, but rather to show their source and application in the text.

The "Ring" contains a number of Middle High German words which have become obsolete in modern German, or have received a new meaning. Many had already been used before Wagner by translators of old literature. Some critics of Wagner have ridiculed all of them; others, with enthusiasm, have given them unrestricted approbation. The endeavor has been made in this work to compare them with recognized authorities, chiefly, however, with the translators previously mentioned, whom Wagner followed, in order to show in what degree he was dependent on others. Etymological development is almost wholly ignored, because in a work of this kind nothing is gained by its consideration. Hans von Wolzogen's little book, "Die Sprache in R. Wagner's Dichtungen," quoted above, is at fault, since in many cases he merely traces the etymology of a word in various Germanic dialects, and from that triumphantly vindicates Wagner's use of it. This misses the mark. Wagner is not studied for the sake of comparative Grammar. Wolzogen also shows the unusual number of words newly coined by Goethe, giving a surprising extract from Lehman,<sup>1</sup> and demands the same privilege for Wagner that is conceded to Goethe. This privilege, of course, no one denies him, but Wagner was not strong enough nor so interested in the matter, to make such an extended use of it.

---

<sup>1</sup>Lehman, *Goethes Sprache und ihr Geist*.

To compare him with Goethe as a creator of language is ridiculous. Even Behagel<sup>1</sup> seems to labor under the impression when he says, "The composer, R. Wagner, has shown himself among the boldest in resuscitating old German words," etc., and even so late an author as Wilh. Kienzl<sup>2</sup> is of the opinion that Wagner enriched the German vocabulary to a noticeable degree, overlooking the fact that in reality he only made use of what he had found in the translations of Germanic scholars. Wagner was a poet, but not a philologist.

What is the explanation of Wagner's use of Middle High German words? We have modern words in place of them, but these are frequently not so apt, nor so distinctive it may be of fine psychological moods. In some cases, the older words have become compounds, and their use in the short alliterative verse is consequently either impossible, or heavy, dull and unwieldy. In some instances, it is well-nigh impossible for modern German to give certain conceptions, or to describe remote conditions, with other than old words. Economy of language will not usually tolerate a word after that for which it stood has become extinct. For this reason a long list of words, current in mediæval times, has disappeared. When, however, it may be centuries after, certain things were revived again in custom, or spoken of in literature, the old words were properly called back from oblivion. At first they have a strange aspect among their new surroundings, but if their use is justified are presently admitted with the rest. Grimm has a goodly number of these rehabilitated words, as have Fouqué, Ettmueller, Simrock, von der Hagen and the others who followed. Wagner, who studied these writers, also uses many of these words, but he often logically goes still further back to their remotest meaning.

In works of the kind under discussion, one must not forget the eternal fitness of things. Every drama moves in an atmosphere of its own. The authors of such works have not created this atmosphere of their own volition; it existed, isolated perhaps and forgotten, before they entered it, but they have had the ability, each in the measure of his genius, to live themselves

<sup>1</sup>Behagel, *A Short Historical Grammar of the German Language*, translated by E. Trechman, M.A., London, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup>Kienzl, *Weltgeschichte in Charakterbildern*, R. Wagner, p. 86 f.

into it according to the time, place and circumstances of the action. Wagner's "Ring" reaches back into the dusk of prehistoric times. Even the choice of such a subject betrays no little intellectual heroism. The Old Norse sagas are the celestial fields where he found this atmosphere, but what a tremendous stride from there into the nineteenth century! The mode of living has been changed; the naive belief in the miraculous has made way for realism; ethical views have been reshaped by Christianity. Only by the utmost stretch of the imagination can we place ourselves in the atmosphere of those remote times, when gods and giants, as facts of existence, determined the destinies of man. Viewed in this light, we are not so much surprised by the use of so-called unusual words in Wagner's drama as by the fact that we do not find more of them. The vocabulary is here considered from two points of view: analogies with translators, and the use and meaning of particular words.

#### I. ANALOGIES WITH TRANSLATORS.

In order to show that Wagner avoided many incongruities, a few citations are here given from Ettmueller's translation of the Edda:

Nattersturm fuerst, p. 4; Mahlschatz, pp. 5, 88; Guelte, p. 10; Wift, p. 11; Schwertbaum, p. 25; Gaden, p. 62; Enke, p. 63; Mannleichbraten, p. 71; Schwich, p. 117, etc. The foot-notes in Ettmueller's book take up more space on many pages than the text. He finds it necessary to translate his translation for the general reader, the reason for which is clear in a passage like the following:

Gestete sie mit Golde und guten Wiften  
 eh' ich sie gaebe zum Gothenvolk.  
 Meiner Harne der haerteste mir ist  
 dass sie die lichten Locken Swanhilds  
 im Hor mit Hufen der Hengste traten.—P. 95.

He uses: gellendes Gold, p. 16; schwinde Schlaege, p. 44; ueberluetzel und laenger, pp. 78, 99; denksam, p. 54; wutgrimm werden, p. 79; lasch, p. 82; hungerwuetig, p. 105; blomig, p. 116; gelsen, p. 99. Wagner wisely avoided these and similar expressions. With a very few exceptions, every word used by him is recognized by Grimm and Sanders in their dictionaries. Where



he depends on others, he is usually careful to choose expressions which even the general reader can understand.

*A. Simrock's Translation of the Edda.*

1. The various designations of Wotan:

*Walvater*, Woeluspa, 1, ich will Walvaters Wirken kuenden; 22, Meth trinkt . . . aus Walvaters Pfand, etc.

*Heervater*, Woeluspa, 23, ihr gab Heervater Halsband und Ringe; cf. 35, 40; Grimnismal, 25, Heidrun heisst die Ziege vor Heervatres Saal; cf. 26; Vafthrudnismal, 2, daheim zu bleiben, Heervater, nahm ich dich in der Asen Gehegen, cf. 40; Hyndluliod, 2, laden (wir) Heervatern in unsere Herzen.

*Sieg Vater*, Woeluspa, 54, nicht saeumt Siegvaters erhabener Sohn; Oegisdrecka, 58, den Wolf bestehn, der den Siegvater schlingt.

Wagner's work is full of these designations.

2. The *Ash-tree*, an exclusive Norse feature, is repeatedly mentioned: Woeluspa, 19; Grimnismal, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 44. All this corresponds to "Walkuere," where the house is built around the tree. Wagner borrowed many features and added others.

3. Several passages betray a striking resemblance to Simrock's translation. Vafthrudnismal, 19, das Haupt stehe hir in der Halle zur Wette um weise Worte; S. 22, hir sitz ich am Herd und setze mein Haupt der Wissenswette zum Pfand. Gaugrader, 20, sage zum ersten. . . . S. 26, nun, ehrlicher Zwerg, sag mir zum ersten. . . . Gaugrader, 44, viel erfuhr ich, viel versucht ich. S. 20, auf der Erde Ruecken ruehrt ich mich viel, Wanderer, weisst, du. . . . Wafthrudnir, 55, du wirst immer der Weisseste sein. S. 27, der Witzigste bist du unter den Weisen. Grogalder, I, wache, Groa, erwache gutes Weib. S. 74, wache, wache, Wala erwach'; cf. Hyndluliod 1, with S. 89, G. 51. Woe-lundarkwida, 31, erst sollst du alle Eide mir leisten bei Schwertes Spitze. G. 56, meines Schwertes Spitze wag' ich d'ran, sie wahr' in Ehren den Eid—bei des Speeres Spitze sprech ich den Eid. Spitze, achte des Spruchs. Fafnismal, 35 (die vierte Adlerin) er daeuchte mich klug, gedaeht er zu nuetzen den Anschlag. S. 61, ist mir doch als spraechen die Voeglein zu mir; nuetzte

mir das des Blutes Genuss *cf.* S. 66. Fafnismal, 40, ein Weib weiss ich, ein wunderschoenes, goldbegabt, waer sie dir vergoennt. S. 72, . . . jetzt wuesst ich ihm noch das herrlichste Weib. Fafnismal, 42, ein Hof ist auf dem hohen Hindarfiall, ganz von Glut umgeben aussen . . . auf dem Steine schlaeft die Streiterfahrne und lodernd umleckt sie der Linde Feind. S. 72, auf hohem Felsen sie schlaeft, ein Feuer umbrennt ihren Saal—85, ein Feuermeer umflutet die Frau, gluehende Lohe umleckt den Fels . . . es waechst der Schein, es schwillt die Glut; sengende Wolken, wabernde Lohe waelzen sich brennend und prasselnd herab, ein Lichtmeer umleuchtet dein Haupt. Sigurdrifumal, 1, heil dir Tag, heil euch Tagessoehnen, heil dir Nacht und naehrende Erde, heil ench Asen, heil euch Asinnen, heil dir fruchtbares Feld. S. 89, heil dir Sonne, heil dir Licht, heil euch Goetter, heil dir Welt, heil dir pragende Erde, etc. Brot af Brynhildarkwidhu, 5, an seinem Leibe lag kein Tadel, zu ruegen war an dem Reinsten nichts. G. 83, wie die Sonne lauter strahlt mir sein Licht, der Reinste war er.

Besides these striking similarities, reference must be made to the other fact that certain common and proper nouns are modified by oft-recurring adjectives and periphrastic phrases which were partly translated from the old sources, and partly newly coined. Wagner has created none of these, as he found them so he used them. Nothing is gained by citing them all, and a few will suffice to prove our statement.

Wala is called: wissendes Weib, Vegtamskvidha, 18; *cf.* S. 75–80; Urmuetter Weisheit, wissendes Weib, wissends Kind, der Welt weisestes Weib, etc.

The sword, like many swords of old, is spoken of as enchanted: Skirnir 23, Siehst du, Maedchen, das Schwert das scharfe, zaubernde, das ich halt in meiner Hand? W. 32: ja, das Schwert, das zaubernde, zuckende Schwert. Because it was enchanted, Wagner calls it: neidliches Schwert, neidlicher Stahl.

Bluehende Braut, Frau, bluehendes Weib, etc., is another of these expressions. *Cf.* W. 16.

Schneller Degen, Held, etc., is a stereotyped expression. In Sigurdharkwida we have: ein hurtiger Held, *cf.* G. 43, geschwinder Held.

Wagner, nevertheless, created a work of his own. The narra-

tives of the Sagas and the Edda in their details are often tame and insipid. Wagner imbues them with life and warmth of emotion. This is clearly shown when one carefully compares his sources with his work. Wagner did for the "Ring" what Schiller did for "Tell" in his use of the old chronicle of Tschudi. Compare, for instance, the matter-of-fact, and to the modern mind, somewhat prosy advice that Bruennhild gives to Siegfried, after her awakening, as told in the Elder Edda and elsewhere in the Old Norse sources. Here it sounds to us much like the advice of a mother concerned for the welfare of her son. First is the weary explanation of the runes; then: *das rat ich zuvoerderst, das rat ich zum andern, das rat ich zum dritten*—all the way up through the units to: *das rat ich zum eilften!* It is true that Siegfried is captivated by Bruennhild's wisdom, and they plight their troth as the result. Wagner, however, true to his principle of dramatic development, lays stress on the emotional part, giving us a scene of pure and undefiled love nowhere surpassed in our literature. And it is all his own. Compare, too, strophe 2, *Brot af Brynhildarkvidhu* and G. 84, where a surprising vocabulary is noticeable, and see what Wagner made of a few meagre hints:

Simrock:

mir hat Sigurd Eide geschworen, Eide geschworen und  
alle gebrochen.

Ettmueller:

Sigurd einstens schwur mir Eide, Eide schwur er, alle  
log er. Da trog er mich, da, traun! er sollte alle aufrecht  
halten, p. 37.

Wagner:

aechter als er schwur keiner Eide, treuer als er hielt keiner  
Vertraege, lautrer als er liebte kein and'rer! Und doch  
alle Eide, alle Vertraege, die traueste Liebe trog keiner  
wie er! O ihr, der Eide heilige Hueter! lenkt euren Blick  
auf mein bluehendes Leid: erschaut eure Schuld! Meine  
Klage hoer', du hehrster Gott!

In the discourse between Mime and Siegfried before the battle with Fafner, each source differs from the other in content, but each is alike in dullness. Wagner's strong scene, S. 51 f., too long for citation here, notwithstanding the striking similarities of vocabulary, is a creation entirely his own.

*B. The Voelsungensaga*

Wagner used von der Hagen's translation<sup>1</sup> of this saga, as a letter to Uhlig, November 11, 1851, shows. Here one can distinguish two features: certain hints which he took, working them out in his own way, and a dependency on verbal construction. In the following comparison "H" stands for v. d. Hagen; the other abbreviations are already familiar:

H., p. 152, nun ward die Hochzeit zugeruestet und kam dazu eine grosse Volksmenge. Wagner, no doubt, utilized this, and with his own knowledge of old Germanic marriage customs, worked out the well-known scene in G. After all the harm had been done and Bruennhild had suffered untold agony by reason of Siegfried's attitude towards her, he made to her the following confession: H., p. 147, ich erinnerte mich nicht deines Namens, und nicht erkannte ich dich eher als bis du vermaehlt warst, und dieses ist der groesste Harm. Wagner's conception of the "Vergessenheitstrank," with all its serious consequences and the tragic result, is probably based on these lines, which he has again worked over carefully according to old traditions. Fouqué describes this episode at length, and perhaps with too much detail, since it occupies the greater part of the third "Abendtheuer." Wagner has gone entirely his own way. Again, in a number of Sagas, notably in the Voelsunga and Wilkina, the brotherhood (Bruederschaft) of heroes is mentioned and even described to some extent. Voelsunga styles it "Stallbruederschaft." Wilkina, "Stall- and Waffenbruederschaft." Grimm actually uses "Blutbruederschaft," Edda, p. 80, which brings Wagner's use of the word quite near to us. Some of the Voelsunga matter is freely embodied in Wagner's stage directions—and here he copied much more freely than in the text. A few such passages are entered almost verbally from H. Examples follow later.

"Rheingold" is almost exclusively Wagner's own creation, but one leading feature is taken from the Voelsunga:

H. 23:

Loki sah nun das Gold, so Andwari hatte, aber als dieser das Gold hervorgebracht hatte. . . .

<sup>1</sup>*Nordische Heldenromane*. Uebersetzt durch Fridrich Heinrich von der Hagen, Breslau, 1814.

R. 56:

so heischt was ihr begehrt, den Hort und sein helles Gold dorthin gefuehrt, das Gold, wie ich's befahl . . .

H.:

da behielt er einen Ring, auch den . . .

R. 59:

ein gold'ner Ring ragt dir am Finger, hoerst du, Alp, der gehoert mit zu dem Hort.

H.:

der Zwerg gieng in den Stein und sprach, dass es jedem den Tod bringen sollte, der den Ring haette und ebenso das Gold.

R. 61:

verflucht sei der Ring! gab sein Gold mir Macht ohne Mass, nun zeug sein Zauber Tod der ihn traegt.

H.:

die Asen gaben das Gold und stopften damit den Otterbalg aus und sah noch ein Barthaar und gebot das zu verhuellen—

R. 67:

This is filling with gold the measure of Freia's height. The tarn-cap fills one gap, the ring the other, and thus hides the piercing glance of Freia's eye.

“Walkuere” bears many resemblances to the translation before us:

H. 13:

ein Mann trat herein in den Saal—er hatte einen tiefen Hut auf, er war sehr lang und bejahrt und einacugig.

W. 18:

ein Fremder trat da herein, ein Greis—tief hing ihm der Hut, er deck't ihm der Augen eins.

H. 6:

er zog das Schwert aus und stiess es in den Stamm, so dass das Schwert bis an das Heft hinein fuhr.

W. 18:

ein Schwert stiess er nun in der Esche Stamm, bis zum Heft haftet es drin.

H.:

wer dieses Schwert aus dem Stamme zieht, der soll es von mir zur Gabe nehmen.

W. 18:

dem soll der Stahl geziemen, der aus dem Stamm es zoeg'.

H.:

da giengen die edelsten Maenner zuerst hinzu, darnach jeder der andern. Keiner aber kam, der es herauszog, denn es ruehrte sich keineswegs . . .

W. 18:

Gaeste kamen und Gaeste giengen, die Staerksten zogen am Stahl—keinen Zoll entwich es dem Stamm. Cf. S. 27.

H. 14:

ich will nun freudig mit ihm sterben, den ich *genoetigt* zum Manne hatte.

W. 18:

er freite ein Weib, das *ungefragt* Schaecher ihm schenkten zur Frau.

H.:

du gehst mit einem Knaben schwanger, pflege dessen wohl . . .

W. 68:

lebe, o Weib—rette das Pfand, das von ihm du empfiengst: ein Wael-sung waechst dir im Schoss. Cf. S. 16.

H.:

verwahre wohl die Schertstuecke . . .

S. 27:

nun verwahrt die Stuecken ein weiser Schmied.

H. 22:

. . . fuhr Sigurd zu Walde und begegnete einem alten Manne—er frug wohin Sigurd fahren wollte.

S. 80:

(Wanderer): wohin, Knabe, heisst dich dein Weg.

H.:

ich weiss dir grossen Hort nachzuweisen.

S. 33:

ich weiss einen schlimmen Wurm.

H.:

Sigurd fragte wo er waere.

S. 33:

wo liegt er im Nest.

H.:

er heisst Fafnir und liegt nicht weit von hir entfernt, has heist Gnyta-Heide.

S. 33:

Neid-hoehle wird er genannt, im Ost am Ende des Walds.

H. 24:

(Reigin) schmiedete ein Schwert und gab es Sigurden—mit diesem Schwerte wirst du Fafnirn erschlagen koennen.

S. 8:

(Mime): ich schuf die Waffe scharf, ihrer Schneide wirst du dich freun.

H.:

und hieb in den Ambos und das Schwert zerbrach—er warf die Klinge weg und bat ihn, ein ander Schwert zu schmieden.

S. 8:

hei, was ist das fuer muessiger Tand! Den schwachen Stift nennst du ein Schwert? (Stage direction): er zerschlaegt es auf dem Ambos, dass die Stuecken ringsum fliegen.

H.:

du sagtest, dass der Drache nicht groesser waere denn—aber mir scheint seine Spur uebergross.

S. 51:

. . . unmassen grimmig ist er und gross.

H. 27:

er spruehte immerweg Gift vor sich her.

S. 52:

giftig giesst sich ein Geifer ihm aus.

H.:

wer bist du und wer ist dein Vater.

S. 53:

wer bist du, kuehner Knabe.

H.:

da stach ihn Sigurd unter den linken Bug, so dass das Schwert bis an das Heft hineinfuhr.

S. 59:

und stoesst sein Schwert bis an das Heft hinein.

H.:

wer reizte dich zu solcher Tat?

S. 60:

wer reizte des Kindes Mut zu der mordlichen Tat.

H.:

sage mir, Fafnir, wenn du so weise bist . . .

S. 60:

weise ja scheinst du . . .

H. 28:

da sitzt Reigin und will betruengen den, der ihm traut.

S. 66:

o traute er Mime dem Treulosen nicht.

H.:

Sigurd merkte nun was der Hengst wollte und sprang ihm auf den Ruecken—da raunte der Hengst als wenn er ledig waere.

S. 73:

fort jagt's mich, jauchzend von hinnen—

H. 29:

. . . und sah dass ein Mann schlief, und lag in voller Ruestung.

S. 87:

ha! in Waffen ein Mann.

H.:

er nahm ihm zuvoerderst den Helm vom Haupte und sah, dass es ein Weib war . . . da schlitzte Sigurd den Panzer vom Haupt bis ganz hernieder und an beiden Seiten entlang.

S. 88:

(Stage direction): vorsichtig loest er den Helm—er durchschneidet mit zarter Vorsicht die Panzerringe zu beiden Seiten der ganzen Ruestung—

H.:

Giuki's Reich stund mit grossem Ruhm.

G. 15:

. . . sage mir, Held, sitz ich herrlich am Rhein, Gunther zu Gibichs Ruhm.

H.:

eines Abends da sie beim Trunke sassen stund die Koenigin auf und trat vor Sigurden und gruesste ihn.

G. 22:

willkommen Gast, in Gibichs Haus! Seine Tochter reicht dir den Trunk.

H.:

eines Abends schenkte Gudrun Sigurden: Sigurd sah, dass sie ein schoenes Weib war—

G. 23:

ha! schoenstes Weib, schliesse den Blick, das Herz in der Brust brennt mir sein Strahl.

H. 35:

Gunnar sprach, wir bieten euch unsere Schwester dar. . . .

G. 25:

(Gunther): Gudrune goenn ich dir gern.

H.:

. . . eure Herrschaft steht nun mit grossem Ruhme, ausser dass ihr noch unvermaehlt seid.

G. 16:

in sommerlich reifer Staerke seh ich Gibichs Stamm, dich, Gunther, unbeweibt.



H. 36:

den allein will sie haben der durch das brennende Feuer reitet, das um ihren Saal geschlagen ist.

G. 16:

ein Feuer umbrennt ihren Saal; nur wer durch das Feuer brieht, darf Bruennhildes Freier sein.

H.:

und brann aussen umher ein Feuer.

S. 90:

Feuer . . . das den Felsen umbrann.

H.:

nun ward die Hochzeit zugeruestet und kam dazu eine grosse Volksmenge.

G. 46:

. . . du, Hagen, minnig rufe die Mannen nach Gibichs Hof zur Hochzeit.

H.:

. . . und eine grosse Luege ist solches.

G. 57:

du listiger Held, sieh wie du luegst.

C. *Fouqué, "Sigurd der Schlangentoeter"*<sup>1</sup>

Wagner was acquainted with this work, and we have reason to assume that he studied it closely. Some scenes nearly resemble those of the "Ring," such as the killing of the dragon and Gunther's house and home in the first scene of G. There are also similarities of language and vocabulary, but so few, after all, that they are apparently wholly accidental, in that both writers used similar sources. After carefully weighing the results of the comparison, it is apparent that, though Wagner at times follows his sources rather closely, he, nevertheless, stands aloof from any modern Nibelung-poem. Fouqué nowhere rises to the height of Wagnerian description. For Hindersfiell he has found only one word, repeating it time and again—Flammenzaun. One of the loftiest descriptions is given on p. 126 f. He calls the sleeping person on the mountain: ein Juenglingsbild—why not even Mannsbild or Frauenzimmer—mein Knab', du bist ein traeger Hueter diesem Bau; O mir, es

<sup>1</sup>*Der Held des Nordens*, von Fr. Baron de la Motte-Fouqué, Erster Teil, Berlin, 1810.

ist kein Knab'—ein Jungfraeulein, das Abbild aller Huld und Lieb'sgewalt. It is a weak figure compared with Wagner's sleeping Bruennhild. Equally weak is Fouqué's Sigurd—a poor benedick. He doubts whether he can go along to get Bruennhild, he feels he ought to stay at home with wife and child. He even resorts to a subterfuge, claiming that King Giuke is not in favor of such an expedition (p. 121). What a tame hero compared with Wagner's Siegfried even in G., from the drink of Blutbruederschaft down to the bitter end! It has already been mentioned that Wagner happily avoided the explanation of the runes and the motherly advice of Bruennhild; Fouqué's Brynhildis begins with Siegrunen and continues down through the list. His passage describing the drinking of Blutbruederschaft runs thus: . . . so mir Odhin hilfreich sei . . . gelob ich, Sigurd, dir Genossenschaft, gelob ich dir zur Hilfe meine Hand, mein Gold, mein Reich, und meine Kriegsgesellen (p. 115). This sounds as though a modern lawyer had written it in full accordance with the law. Cf., on the other hand, G. 26, for dramatic action and glowing color of description.

## II. USE AND MEANING OF WORDS

### A. Middle High German Words

#### *Bruenne*

Appears several times, W. 73, S. 88, 93, 94. Twice it alliterates with Bruennhilde, once with Brunst, twice with p, prangend, Panzer. Kluge calls it a recently-borrowed word from mhg. Jordan uses it. Ettmueller and Simrock use it exclusively in the Edda, the latter almost exclusively in Nibelungen Not. Grimm often uses Panzer, Panzerhemd. Ettmueller, p. 20: was schnitt die Bruenne; 33 in die Goldbruenne fuhr sie; 55 und die Bruenngehuellten . . . ; 105 der Bruennkuehne; 110 Breunnbrecher; Simrock: Helgakwida 6, wie ist dir mit Blut die Bruenne bespritzt. Cf., also, 43; Gripispa, 15.

#### *Friedel*

Is used four times, R. 8, 10, 63; G. 66. In mgh. it is always a masc. substantive: der vriedel; cf. Kudrun 775, es habe einen vriedel diu herliche maid; Walther v. d. Vogelw., "Unter der Linde," the young woman says: dô was mîn friedel komen ê;

*cf.*, also, Dietmar v. Aist, Tagelied: slafest du, min vriedel. Wagner uses it as a masculine, but once as a feminine, R. S, Alberich to Woglinde: mein Friedel sei. Most translators use it; Simrock, Edda, p. 195, doch hiess ich der Friedl nun seiner Frau; Ettmueller, Edda, p. 30, doch seiner Frauen Friedl hiess ich. The word is not used outside of this field, it is even rare in older Mhg., Gesta Rom., und die nam eines Nachts ihrem mann die sluessel aus dem haupt (from under the pillow) und tet die tuer heimlichen auf und gieng aus zu irem friedel. Wagner also uses the word *frieden*, which is obsolete; G. 18, ist er der herrlichste Held der Welt, der Erde holdeste Frauen *friedeten* laengst ihn schon; G. 57, doch Frauengroll *friedet* sich bald. Also used by the translators: Hagen, Wilkina, chap. 25, . . . befreite und *friedete* das Land; Voelsunga, ihr Land *frieden*; Simrock feels the necessity of using the modern prefix: Nib. Not, die iu *vriden* helfen: die euch *befrieden* helfen.

### *Gesell*

Is used twice, W. 46, S. 86. In mhg. it had a two-fold meaning: (a) companion, Nib. Not. 64, 343, 769, 1153, etc.; in 2082 Hagen calls Volker his *geselle*, in 582 *geverte* is used. In Iwein 2115 Landine the queen calls her maid *geselle*: Weistû aber, *geselle*, rehte ob er mich welle, thus being used as *mascl.* and *fem.* (b) as lover, husband. In 2339 Iwein has at last the opportunity to speak to the queen, he assures her that this is his happiest day: gôt ruoche nur das heil bewarn, das wir *gesellen* muesen sin. The situation in W. is almost identical. Both meanings are further illustrated by Walther v. d. Vogelweide, "Unlust der Zeit:" wan das ich nicht *gesellen* hân (companion) and Ereck 1124, 1141, where the wife of Artus calls her husband *geselle*. Wagner uses the word in its old sense as lover, but in the *mascl.* and *neuter*. Siegmund calls himself the *Gesell* of his betrothed: Siegmund ist dir *Gesell*, and S. 86, Siegfried: jetzt lock ich ein liebes *Gesell*. No examples are found in the translators, but Bavarian has it, *cf.* Schmeller: *Gesell*, and *Gesellin* for the beloved one, *Geliebte*.

### *Geschmide*.

Von der Hagen: Amilias and Wieland at the court of Nidung vie with one another as to whom should belong the honor of

being the best smith. Amilias says in Wilkina, chap. 21: und nimmer will ich das zugeben, dass dein Geschmeide besser sei. Here used in its old meaning, *gesmide*, a forged metal. Simrock, Nib. Not, 1269: si heten noch *gesmide*, das man devor riet—sie haetten noch Geschmeide, meaning metal ornaments for horses. Edda, Regismal 26: im Schleier sass sie, ein Geschmeid auf der Brust; *cf.* 34: nun sass er und beschenkte mit Schmuck und Geschmeide. Thus Wagner. Mime remonstrates with Siegfried for destroying the sword which he forged, S. 5: er kniekt und schmeisst es entzwei, als schuef ich Kindergeschmeid—not a toy for children, but a sword so weak as though forged by children; S. 9, Siegfried still angered by Mimi's poor workmanship: waer mir nicht schier zu schaebig der Wicht, ich zerschmiedet' ihn selbst mit seinem Geschmeid.

### *Mannen*

Is invariably used by von der Hagen in Wilkina, meaning, of course, a vassal (*Lehnsmann*). Simrock in Nib. Not, usually writes *Bann*, not always with good judgment. Wagner reaches back to the old word, G. 46: rufe die Mannen . . . ihr Gibichs Mannen, machet euch auf . . . ihm folgen der Magen feindliche Mannen, G. 48.

### *Mage*

Appears twice. W. 13, *vermaehlen* wollte der Magen Sippe, and G. 48, cited a few lines above. As a modern word, it is rare. In the sixteenth century it is occasionally used, Brant, *Narrenschiff*: das kind sein eltern btrugt und mog. In the seventeenth century it was less frequently used in literature, but retained as a legal term; *cf.* Grimm, *Wtb.* The eighteenth century tried to revive it, but without success; Wieland and Buerger use it. No one did more to rehabilitate it than the translators. Ettmueller uses it throughout in the Edda, about fifteen times: nun ist Yngwis Mag zu uns kommen, II Sigl.; und den werten Soehnen, den mutigen Magen, Lied von Hamdir; wird der Maenner Magenschaft dann auch Freundschaft werden, I Sigl.; maechtige Magenschaft warb ich, Groenl. Lied von Atli. Wagner's use of it is, nevertheless, unfortunate. Even Ettmueller feels constrained to explain it in a foot-note. Wagner's passage, W. 13, is so peculiar that an acquaintance with historical German is necessary to

make it intelligible. The only justification for the use of the word by Wagner is the fact that the translators have used it and its environment in the text. The whole passage bears the mark of martial description; Tross, Kampf, Grimm, Mord, Rache—words expressing the mood and intention of the avenger.

*Minne.*

Grimm, Simrock, Ettmueller, von der Hagen and others use it without reservation. It is treated here because Wagner uses it in a peculiar sense, with its verb, adjective, adverb and in various compounds. Mhg. had no word which could convey the deep, soulful and pure love toward God or woman as did this one. The Court Epics and the Minnesong, especially that of Walther and Kuerenberg, give ample proof of this. Vilmar notes that the word contains "the meaning of love of enraptured youth, it is German love, a silent, longing meditation upon the beloved one, a sweet contemplation of the gracious one whose name dare not even be uttered." In the sad decay of mhg. classicism, the word began to lose its pure meaning, so that in Luther's time it conveyed the idea of lewdness (*Buhlschaft*), which compelled him to reject it. Sincere efforts have been made by modern writers to restore it, but they have unhappily used it as a designation for love in general. Wagner gives it its old specific meaning. It is not necessary to quote every instance of it.

*Substantive*, W. 28, der Minne Zauber entzueckte sie; *cf.* R. 10, 18; W. 13; G. 11, 23, 58, 69, 87. *Verb*, R. 13, das Maedchen das du minnst; *cf.* W. 46, 77. *Adjective*, S. 13, dein minniges Weibchen. *Adverb*, W. 84, und darf nicht minnig mein Gruss dich mehr gruessen; *cf.* G. 46. Besides these he has a feminine formation: die Minnige, R. 65, S. 91; also the plural compound: Wasserminnen, G. 68. Wagner did not employ the word merely for the sake of restoring it to modern usage, but needed it to convey a certain conception, since simultaneously with Minne he also uses Liebe. This is, however, only in rare cases: W. 25, 29; S. 13; G. 35, 86. The present participle (*liebend*) appears twice, W. 28, 46, and *Geliebte* once, W. 48. The question arises why these words were used interchangeably. Alliteration may have prompted it in some cases, but Liebe was no doubt used

to express the intrepidity of love, which is entirely distinct from Minne, which designates the sentimental element. Young Siegfried sees the birds in the forest, they build nests, feed and rear their young; he sees stags, and foxes, and wolves; the male brings food, the female suckles the young; in the midst of the storm and stress of life, in the struggle for existence, he learns what *Liebe* is. Analogous to this is Bruennhild's experience. Gods, men and circumstances have driven her from one struggle to another; through strife and deceit she learns that neither worldly possessions, nor gold, nor the splendor of the gods, neither house nor home, nor anything under the sun brings that felicity for which the heart of poor mortal longs: selig in Lust und Leid laesst nur die *Liebe* sein. One feels at once that Minne is too weak a word, and entirely out of place in such a connection. Mhg. clearly brings out this observation, and we may assume that Wagner learned to feel the distinction in his sources. There, in a number of cases, *Liebe* alliterates with *Leid*, as it does in our text. In Ditmar's Tagelied, already cited in another connection, the lover has been awakened by his beloved one, and is thereby reminded of an abrupt and, for him, cruel separation. He laments: liep âne leit mac niht gesîn. In his Iwein, Hartman von Aue brings the two friends, Iwein and Gawein, together in single combat. According to mediæval custom, the heroes open their visors and make themselves known to each other after the combat, and when each recognizes with whom he fought: dô wonte under in zweien liebe bî leide. The objection that Minne is out of place when two men are concerned strengthens the argument. Cf. Nib. Not, 17, 224.

### *Missewende*

Is used twice, but in one sentence, W. 8: Missewende folgt mir wohin ich fliehe, Missewende naht mir wohin ich mich neige. Wolzogen says, "This peculiar, sullen goddess is well known to the older poets; to them it did not only mean misfortune, but that which must be morally reprovèd." This is true, but no moral wrong has yet been committed by Siegmund; nothing has yet happened in the play, and what he did before coming upon the scene is morally justifiable. It could not have been Wagner's intention to use the word in this sense. That it was chosen with

conscious intention is clear, for even if he had wished to go back to mhg., he would have found such words as *unheil*, *unsaelde*; moreover, he avoids the word in all succeeding passages, using in its place *Unheil*. Compare the answer that Sieglinde gives in the next lines. Siegmund is a martyr to fatalism, and Wagner makes a clear distinction between that which haunts Siegmund, however abstract it may be (*Missewende*), and what he considers as the result of this condition (*Unheil*). Here are two distinct conceptions; *Missewende* describes the cause of Siegmund's condition, *Unheil* the effect. If both terms were to be understood synonymously, *Unheil* would require the definite article; but the terms cannot be used interchangeably, since they do not stand for the same concept. The sources use *Unheil* without distinction.

#### *Mut.*

Wagner seldom uses this in the sense of courage, and rightly so, from his point of view. The word has received a two-fold meaning, which may be called the East and the West Germanic. Gothic *mōds*, Luc., 4, 28, jah fullai waurthun allai modis in thisai synagogein; Luther, Zorn; Gr. *φνμός*. In Westgermanic it turned up as equivalent for "to feel," "to desire," "to think;" Anglo-s. *mod*, Engl. *mood*, Obg. *muot*, *animus*, *Gemuot*. *Lexer* gives the three ultimate functions, cognition, feeling and will, indicating the totality of psychological disposition. It is related to Lat. *movere*, and in our text means inwardly to be moved. Modern German employs it in this sense only, either as a compound (*Schwermut*, *Sauftmut*), or modified by an adjective (*froher Mut*, *grimmer*, *grimmiger Mut*). Wagner reaches back to the old meaning, R. 13, *Wut und Minne, wild und mæchtig, wuehlt mir den Mut auf*. Alberich is stirred by a made desire for the Rheingold and one of the Rheindaughters. Both seem so distant, so unattainable, that wrath and passion disturb the equipoise of every soul function to its very depth. We have here the same condition, a longing perfectly analogous to Alberich in Nib. Not, 3, *der minniglichen maide triuten wol gezam—ir muoten kuene recken*—the *ir* taken as genitive, gives the idea of longing after with one's whole soul. Cf., also, Nib. Not, 18. Gottfried von Strassburg uses *muot* and *muoten* in

the same way. In the land of Marke was great excitement because the inhabitants had to pay a yearly tribute to Irland. When Tristan comes to Tintajoel, seht, dâ gehôrte er unde vernam in gazzen unde in strazzen von klagen al solh gelazzen, das es in muote starke. Ettmueller uses the word without qualification: Grau'n will ich stiften aus grimmen Mute, III Sigl. It is likely that Wagner learned the import of this word from the translators.

### *Nicker.*

Wagner found this in Grimm, *Mythol.*, I, p. 456, *Nichus*, a water-spirit. *Cf.*, also, A. Hauffen, "Zur Kunde vom Wassermann," *Forschungen zur neueren Literaturgeschichte*, 1898, p. 79. Notice that Wagner also uses the word in the sense of "one who nods," S. 11.

### *Sippe.*

This has good antecedents in modern literature. Lessing, *Nathan*, 4, 7, . . . als Vetter oder sonst als Sipp verwandt. *Cf.* R. 26, W. 10, 13, 14, 18, 30, 47; G. 7, 40. Compounds: Sippenblut, W. 14; Heldensippe, S. 26. Simrock avoids the word in *Nib. Not.*, 2106; Ettmueller uses it throughout: werden Giukis Soehne in Sippen roeten ihre Waffen, I Sigl., 50; *cf.* III Sigl., 18; II Gudl., 35; III Gudl., 5, etc. He also uses Sippschaft, but not in the modern contemptuous sense. *Cf.* Groenl. *Lied von Atli.*, 72.

### *Schaecher.*

Kluge marks this with a cross, indicating uncommon usage. Even Adelung calls it archaic. All agree that it was kept in use by the designation of the two evildoers crucified with Christ, and for that reason was retained in the dictionaries; *cf.* Grimm, *Wtb.* Modern authors, Goethe, Hebbel, Freiligrath and others use it, but in a very vague meaning. With them it may be an evildoer of any kind. Wagner reaches back to the original meaning: "to rob," and even "to kill," if necessary. Vulgate: *latrones*. *Cf.*, W. 18, er freite ein Weib, das ungefragt Schaecher ihm schenkten zur Frau, with *Nib. Not.*, 1046, 1047, where Gunther lies to his sister in trying to free Hagen from guilt in connection with Siegfried's death: ich willz iuch wizzen lan, in



sluogen schachaere—here Simrock translates Schaecher. In R. 55, Alberich, the thief of the Rheingold, is called Schaecher; R. 60, where Wotan has taken the gold from Alberich, is called by the same name, and S. 67, Siegfried having killed Fafner, the former says: sein Tod graemt mich doch schier, da viel ueblere Schaecher unerschlagen noch leben. The meaning in each of these instances is that of a person who wrongfully and by force takes what belongs to another. This pertains even to the theft of persons.

*Wal.*

As early as Hans Sachs, this word had been used as a compound, Walstatt. Wagner uses it in a two-fold meaning: (1) as battlefield, where he uses Wal and Walstatt interchangeably: darum ruestig und rasch reite zur Wal, W. 27; auf der Walstatt allein erschein ich Edlen, W. 49; (2) a howe, a heap of dead bodies, battle, death, and above all, the prey, dead heroes which the valkyries were to bring to Walhall, the abode of Wal: lauerst du hir luestern auf Wal, jenen kiese zum Fang, W. 52; nach Walhall brechen wir auf, Wotan zu bringen die Wal, W. 62; it means the "choice" of a certain hero, or of many heroes, singled out by previous deliberation for Walhall. Our modern "Walstatt" does not convey this conception, because the idea has become extinct; Wagner, dealing with remote conditions, could hardly get along without the word. Ettmueller uses both words in the third Sigurdlied: kein so Ruestiger reitet den Recken zur Wahlstatt; doch nicht zu Wunsch die Wahl ihr ist; ziert die Burg mit welscher Decken Schmuck, mit der Wahlen Menge.

*Weia Waga Wagalaueia.*

Wolzogen, p. 100, "R. Wagner's Sprache," gives many good examples of what he calls "Jauchzerbildungen," and in his collected essays, "Wagneriana," p. 211 ff, he gives an excellent explanation of this much-ridiculed formation. Wagner also explains it in "Gesammelte Schriften," ix. 396. It is Mhg. wac, heilawac. In a letter to Nitzsche, June 12, 1872, he writes: "From Grimm's study (*cf.* Mythol., p. 55), I took the old German heilawac, formed it so as to make it more flexible for my purpose into Weiawaga, made my own deriviations from the cognate roots wogen, wiegen, wellen, wallen, and thus formed, analogous

to the Eia-Popeia of our nurseries, a syllabic melody of roots for my water-maidens." Applied to the flowing water, and as a song for the Rheindaughters, these words are full of singular meaning.

The "Ring" contains several

### *Adjectives*

which need special consideration.

#### *freislich*

More objection has been made to this word than any other. True, it is no modern word. Even the sixteenth century used it sparingly. Aimon, "Ein schoen lustig geschiet etc.," tausend freislicher Schwein. No later writers use it; *cf.* Grimm, Wtb. No examples were found in the translators; Simrock avoids it in every instance: Nib. Not, 211, der kuene Sivrit, der gewan in dem sturme einen vreislichen sit: der kuehne Siegfried gewann in dem Sturme einen furchtbaren Brauch (!); 341, es pfliget diu kueneginne so vrislicher sit: so grimmiger Sitte pflegt die Koenigin. In our time it is retained dialectically in the Palatinate as freisterlich (Gesicht, Erscheinung), and Wagner must have felt it peculiarly pregnant, for he uses it repeatedly, W. 84; S. 54; G. 17, 47; freislicher Fels, Streit, Schlund, Knabe, freisliches Weib.

#### *glau.*

Appears once, R. 11, schein ich nicht schoen dir, glatt und glau. Its etymology is clear; *cf.* Kluge: Goth. glaggwuba, exact; Anglos. gleov; Engl. glee; Ohg. glau, wise, intelligent; Mhg., glühe, shining. The dictionaries vary somewhat in glossing it. Vilmar: in the Westerwald it means cosy; Woeste: munter, lebhaft, schelmisch, dat kind kiket so glau; Lessing also found the word, *cf.* Cotta Ed., vol. 16, p. 134. "It is," he says, "a lower Saxon word which we ought, by all means, take up into our language. It means as much as bright, clear (hell, scharf), and is used of the eyes," etc. Bremer Wtb. copies Lessing's definition and admonition almost verbally, but has nothing new to add. Schmeller gives the following quotation in which the same alliteration appears as in our text, Wiener Tageblatt, March 19, 1850: "Der gestrenge Herr sass glatt und glau im verschwiegenen Amtskaemmerlein, umfungen von eines Lehn-

stuhls weicher Umarmung." Glatt und glau is a locution which Wagner, perhaps, may have learned as a child.

*mordlich.*

The word is purely Mhg., and is often used from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Simrock retains it, Nib. Not, 873, mortlichen zorn: mordlichen Zorn, but 995, mortlichen sit: moerderische Weis'; 996 mortliche erslagen: meuchlerisch erschlagen. Cf. Edda, Sigurdarkwida 40, Gudrunarkwida 7. Fouqué, p. 145, hei, hei, mordliche Macht. Grimm, Edda, p. 54, ihre Brueder raten zu deinem mordlichen Tod. Wagner, S. 60, wer reizte das Kind zu der mordlichen Tat.

*neidlich.*

Is used ten times. Seven times with Stahl or Schwert, W. 25, 33; S. 36, 37, 38, 47; G. 17; once with Macht, G. 41; once with Volk, R. 6; once with Hort, S. 47. Etymologically, it is Mhg. nîtlich, but is not used here in the old sense, which was "hostile," "malevolent." Wagner wishes to convey the idea of "desirable," "enviable," but never "envious," as has been thought. When he wishes to express this latter idea, he uses the regular adjective neidisch, W. 54, zwei Leben . . . nimm sie Nothung, neidischer Stahl. It is one of Wagner's preferred adjective formations in -lich; cf. the preceding: mordlich, also wehrlich, W. 11, wehrlich und stark; W. 12, von dem wehrlichen Paar, meaning wehrhaft; also sorglich, which is somewhat ambiguous, meaning, no doubt, sorgfaetig, R. 52, der sorglichste Schmied; cf. Ettmueller, p. 49, da ich sorglich sass; p. 50, wie ich sinnend saesse sorglich dorten.

*unmassen.*

S. 51, unmassen grimmig ist er und gross (der Wurm). This, the regular form without umlaut, is purely Mhg. Cf. Nib. Not. 46, 50, 325, 327, 329, etc., 1010 has the same phrase as our text: iâmer wart unmâzen grôz. Simrock uses it frequently; cf. his translation of the above quotations, also strophe 5: unmassen kuehn.

There is only one *verb* which calls for special attention in this connection:

*kiesen.*

The present tense was used by Klopstock, Wieland and others. Wagner uses it in the following connections: (a) indefinite, jemand, etwas *kiesen*, R. 11, W. 52; (b) with a substantive, *Kampf kiezen*, S. 71; (c) as a compound, *Looskieserin*, W. 74. The Mhg. *kiesen* has manifold meanings: to see, to detect, Nib. Not, 404; to feel, 1850; to behold, 2074; to be convinced, 2327. Simrock avoids it in every one of these instances, though he uses it otherwise: *Voluspa*, 61, *da kann Hoernir selbst sein Loos kiezen*. Von der Hagen, *Voelsunga*, chap. 19, *dass du dir selbst einen Mann kiezen sollst*; cf., also, chap. 49; *Ettmueller* uses *kuehren*, p. 31, *kuehren die Toten*, p. 40, *kuehrt auch ich dort*; *Fouqué*, p. 181, *zu kuehren sich*, p. 176, *zu boeser Kuehr gestellt*. Wagner uses it not only in the present tense, but also (1) in the preterite, R. 27, *Kampf kiesten wir nicht*, R. 11, *bei einer kieste mich keine*; (2) past participle, W. 52, *dir ward das Loos gekiest*, S. 22, *mein Kopf ist dein, du hast ihn erkiest*; (3) imperative, W. 26, *dem Wael-sung kiese sie Sieg*. Also *Kuehr*, W. 44, *bist du meines Wissens blind waehlende Kuehr*.

### *B. Unusual Words*

In the foregoing pages the attempt has been made to show that, with very few exceptions, Wagner used only words which were used by others before him; where this was not the case, he took them over from Mhg. in their old form. It is evident, accordingly, that he was not a creator of language in so great a degree as some have supposed. His new departures have nowhere permanently impressed themselves upon the language. So far, his language breathes the spirit of the translators whom he followed, it is flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone. There is, however, a new category which shows only a slight resemblance to his sources. All of these unusual words, with but few exceptions, are, nevertheless, to be found in the dictionaries.

*Fresse.*

Is a vulgarism; S. 58, *eine zierliche Fresse zeigst du mir da*, said by Siegfried to Fafner. The passage depicts the young man as an exuberant youth, full of wantonness, but such passages are not uncommon. "*Wallensteins Lager*" is a case in point. Also

"Faust," II, act 4, Raufbold: Wenn einer mir in's Auge sieht, werd' ich ihm mit der Faust gleich in die Fresse fahren; "Egmont," sein Hals waer ein rechtes Fressen fuer einen Scharfrichter.

### *Klinze.*

R. 54, 65. Is good Mhg., now obsolete. Kluge marks it with an asterisk, to denote uncommon usage; H. Paul: it is md.; Schmeller cites it in Wagner's sense. Schlegel, Rueckert and others use it, cf. Grimm, Wtb. Wagner uses two synonyms: Spalte, R. 67, Ritze, R. 67, both referring to the same thing. No doubt Klintze was used for the purpose of alliteration with Kroete and Klemme.

### *Wach.*

S. 69, ohne Wach und Wissen. This is not our English watch, but the condition of wakefulness. Cf. Bang, R. 74, sicher vor Bang und Grauen.

### *Witzigung.*

R. 57, eine Witzigung waer's, die weise macht. Formations in -ung were more common before the first half of the nineteenth century than to-day. Goenne meinem Herzen diese Ergiessung, "Stella," act 4; hoeren sie das Resultat meiner Entschliessungen "Julius von Tarent," act 2, scene 5; diese Witzigung kannst du auf Conto deines Meuchelmords hinnehmen, Fiesco, act 2, scene 9.

### *Zucht.*

In the sense of experience, R. 57, zu teuer nicht zahl ich die Zucht. Wagner also uses it in the regular sense: "discipline," S. 63, ich zog ihn auf, fuer die Zucht zahlt er mir nun—fuer des Knaben Zucht will der . . . wohl gar Koenig nun sein.

### *gangeln.*

Is dialectic. Schmeller: apparently identical with gankeln, to dangle, to rock, sway. Grimm, Wtb., says it is common in all German dialects; stem gank-, to dangle.

### *lackern.*

S. 29, was flackert und lackert . . . umher. Not found in the dictionaries, but Ettmueller uses it: lackern wird sein Haus in

der Lohe Roete, p. 117, having reference to the conflagration of the castle. It may possibly be Swiss.

*talpen.*

Schmeller under "Tolpatsch:" Hungarian infantry—talpas, broadfooted. Wagner may have learned it in Switzerland; here there is a masc. and fem. substantive: Talpe, a paw. Lilienkron, Volkslieder, 146, 8: er (der Baer) ward in einem Talpen wund, *cf.* Grimm, Wtb. No other verifications. Wagner, R. 37, durch das Tal talpen sie (die Riesen). Again very likely used for the purpose of alliteration.

*tappern*

Is dialectic. Grimm: iterative to *tappen*, as much as *tappeln*, to walk clumsily. Stadler, I, 266; in Silesia: *tapern*, to be slow, clumsy; Weinhold, 97: Nassauisch, *taepfern*, to dance, stamp with the foot while dancing. Wagner, S. 6, ich tapp're und haemm're nur weil der Knabe es wuenscht. Mime forging Siegfried's sword. Lower Alemanic has *gfaetterle*, to toy, with *daepperle*, to pound slightly, but quickly, to hammer uselessly. Swiss uses it in the same way, perhaps Wagner learned it in Switzerland.

*wabern*

Means to move hither and thither, to and fro, an old Germanic word equivalent to Old Norse *vafra*, to move swingingly, said of the flame; synonym to *flackern*, to waver, Angls. *waefre*. The word, so far as it has been used at all, had lost its original meaning, as the following examples show: Luther, Tischreden, der in seinem Lande guten Frieden hielte, dass die Leute koendten sicher drinnen wandeln, wabern und handeln. Vilmar takes it as a frequentive to *weben*, and cites Ferrarius, die Fuesse gehn und wabern; Grimm, Wtb. can do no better, and cites the same examples. Schmeller seems at a loss to explain it. The rise of Germanic studies, and especially the translation of the Edda, introduced the word again in its original meaning. Grimm, Heldensage, de ward sie von einem wabernden Feuer umgeben; Wagner, S. 29, was schwebt dort und webt und wabert umher; S. 80 einen Felsen such ich, von Feuer ist er umwabert. Grimm, Wtb. cites several passages from Wagner's "Ring" as authentic

verifications. Waberlohe is also used. Simrock, Fielswinsmal, wie heisst der Saal, der umschlungen ist mit Waberlohe; Ettmueller, Introduction, p. XXVI, Wafrogi, Flackerlohe; cf., also, Grimm, Mythol., 4, 1500; Wagner, W. 85, sengende Wolken, wabernde Lohe waelzen sich; W. 86, herauf, wabernde Lohe.

### *zullen*

Is dialectic, cf. Paul, Wtb., Sander, Wtb., Zulp., sucking bag, Zulper, a cigar: wenn er mit dem schmauchenden Nikotin-Zulper aus dem Laden tritt; Schmeller: is Franconian, to suck. It is used dialectically in many parts of Saxony, where Wagner may have learned it as a child; S. 10, als zullendes Kind zog ich auf, cf. S. 16.

With reference to Wagner's use of

### *Adjectives.*

it is needless to call attention to the almost sublime naiveté of the translators. From a long list in Ettmueller, the following may suffice: reichgruen, p. 65, ratklug 2, bruennkuehn 105, not-falb 66, meingemischt 22, heissgier 72. Grimm and Simrock take the same liberty in forming compound adjectives which are not found in the dictionaries. Compared with these writers, Wagner is most conservative, since the whole "Ring" contains only four instances not acknowledged by the lexicographers: beuteruehrig, fluchfetrig, lustfrei, maidlich. Their meaning is easily determined by the context. Cf. Wolzogen, p. 75 and 81; magdileh, S. 76, die magdliche Blume; G. 11, meiner Staerke magdlicher Stamm, and fraeulich, R. 8, mein Friedel sei, du fraeuliches Kind, are unusual, but occasionally used by modern writers. Cf. Grimm, Wtb., also Ettmueller, Edda.

### III. THE VERBAL PREFIX

The substantive and adjective prefix is regular. The reader is nowhere interrupted or surprised and never has occasion to consider questionable or peculiar formations. The verbal prefix, however, is often either used or dropped in many cases which should be pointed out. Before doing so, it may not be amiss to quote Ettmueller, who in the Edda takes similar license:

focerderst: zufoerderst, ring: gering, truegen: betruegen, mal-

men: zermalmen, halsen: umhalsen; Grimm, Edda, p. 49, nieden: hienieden.

(1) *The Prefix Dropped*

*bergen.*

Wagner uses it interchangeably with *verbergen*, though the language makes a clear distinction between the two; *cf.* the past participle of both: *geborgen*, *verborgen*, the one meaning "to bring into safety," the other, "to hide from view." (a) to bring into safety, R. 48, *sonst birgt er sich schwer meines Armes Schwunge*; (b) to hide from view, R. 23, *die in boesen Bund mich verrieten, sie alle bergen sich nun*, *cf.* R. 52, W. 21, 28, 71, 72, 73; G. 52.

*denken.*

W. 52, *ich denk ihn zu faellen im Kampf*. Announcement of the intention to carry out something that has been premeditated is usually expressed by *gedenken*; *cf.* Heyne, Wtb.

*freuen.*

G. 58, *wen die Minne freut, meinem frohen Mute tu' es der Glueckliche gleich*; here used as a transitive, which is usually rare. Goethe, Hafis *gleich wird er die Voelker ewig freuen*.

*gchren.*

W. 13, *geht ihr nach Wonne, weckt' ich nur Weh*; used with adverb, as here, it is archaic. Ettmueller, p. 42, *dass Gudrun gierte zu sterben*. Notice S. 33, *gerne begehrt ich*, and G. 67, *gehrenswert*.

*muten*

R. 31, *Ersatz zu muten dem Mann*; here for *zumuten*, *cf.* W. 29, where it is regularly used: *mir mute nicht zu*, etc.

*schlingen.*

Archaic for *verschlingen*, S. 33, *der wuergt' und schlang schon viel (der wurm)*.

*schwinden.*

G. 70, *kommt, Schwestern, schwindet dem Toren*; *schwinden*, to dissolve, disappear by degrees, Goethe, *die Hand wird nach und nach schwinden und endlich ganz verschwinden*; Wagner, S. 41, *nun schwinde die rote Scham*.



*sehren.*

R. 61, den sehre die Sorge; W. 16, die mit guessem Zwange mich sehrt. As adj., W. 51, du sahst der Walkuere sehrenden Blick; as pres. partic., W. 80, wo ich sehrend mich wandte. All obsolete. The only modern form used by Wagner is the past partic., where he had no choice, W. 30, da zuerst du selbst sie versehrt.

*wirren.*

For verwirren, G. 9, ein wuestes Gesicht wirrt mir wuetend den Sinn, he also uses the past partic. weak: verwirrt ist das Geweb; cf. Blatz, Nhd. Gram., I., p. 478.

*zuernnen.*

G. 57, glaub' mir, mehr zuernt es mich als dich, for erzuernnen. Cf. Heyne, Wtb.

*schmaehen.*

For verschmaehen, R. 16, des Goldes Schmuck schmaechte er nicht, wuesste er all seine Wunder. When Alberich says, mir gilt euer Gold wenig, he does not revile, he merely despises it.

## (2) The Prefix Used

*ertosen.*

W. 72, schrecklich ertost dein Toben, cf. Grimm, Wtb., where only one other such instance is cited.

*erduenken.*

S. 91, denn mir allein erduenkte Wotans Gedanke. Not a dictionary form. The meaning becomes clear when compared with other passages describing Bruennhild's relation to Wotan: denn ich allein erkannte, eriet, durchschaute, ahnte Wotans Gedanke.

*erraten.*

For gewinnen, erlangen, to get possession of. G. 74, doch moecht' er den Ring sich erraten. It does not mean to guess correctly, though Wagner uses the word in that sense, too, W. 22, was mich berueckt, errat ich nun leicht, S. 15, kaum das Reden haett' ich erraten.

*erlaben.*

S. 38, von der Mueh erlab ihn ein Trunk.

*erheben.*

G. 75, ihm sollt er den Hort nur erheben, seems to stand for the well-known idiom: den Schatz heben.

*entfragen.*

W. 41, so leicht ja entfrug mir Fricka den Trug.

*enttagen.*

G. 17, so ungeheurer Tat enttagte des Helden Ruhm. Cf. Grimm, Wtb., under ertagen, but notice that Wagner uses this latter also, W. 31, nichts lerntest du eh' dir ertagte die Tat.

*enttrinken.*

W. 80, ueppigen Rausch enttrankst du lachend der Liebe Trank.

*entschlagen.*

W. 81, du zeugtest ein edles Geschlecht, kein Zager kann je ihm entschlagen.

*umbangen.*

S. 95, Nacht umbangt gebundene Augen. Goethe, wie des Persers Bulbul Rosenbusch umbangt.

*verwachsen.*

G. 70, so weise und stark verwaehnt sich der Held.

*zergreifen.*

S. 9, mit einem Griff zergreif ich den Quark.

*zerschmieden.*

S. 9, waer mir nicht schier zu schaebig der Wicht, ich zerschmiedet ihn selbst.

*zerschwingen.*

S. 5, es gibt ein Schwert, das er nicht zerschwaenge; G. 69, mein Schwert zerschwang einen Speer.

*zertrotzen.*

S. 5, Nothungs Truemmer zertrotzt er nicht; S. 86, zerfochtene Waffe.

#### IV. STYLISTIC OBSERVATIONS

##### (1) *Wagnerian Idioms*

*darben.*

R. 38, an den Aesten darbt und dorrt das Obst; S. 54, rufe mich auch, darbst du des Rats; G. 6, falb fielen die Blaetter, duerr

darbte der Baum. Cf. Simrock, Oegisdreeka, 39 der Hand muss ich darben; Voeluspa S und darbten goldener Dinge noch nicht.

*magern.*

S. 25, vor Wotan magert mein Muttrwitz.

*hungern.*

S. 49, mich hungert sein.

*jaul gelingen.*

S. 31, Liebe zu mir sollte er lernen, das gelang nun leider jaul. *heissen.*

S. 52, doch heisse mich das, hat auch der Wurm ein Herz; otherwise heissen is commonly used: S. 53, soll das etwa Fuerchten heissen; cf. R. 13, W. 18, 24; G. 7; but S. 80: wohin, Knabe, heisst dich dein Weg.

*jach.*

G. 27, um die Rueckkehr ist's mir jach.

*taugen*

For gelingen, geraten, S. 57, auf dem Rohre taugt die wonnige Weise mir nicht. He avoids this word on the same page; auf dem dummen Rohre geraet mir nichts.

*wahr weisen.*

G. 69, Siegfried, wir weisen dich wahr.

*werter gelten.*

G. 35, ein Blitz aus dem hehren Glanz gilt mir werter als . . . *ueben.*

S. 75, Weisen ueb' ich, dass weithin wache was fester Schlaf verschliesst; cf. S. 47, anders als dumme Riesen ueb' ich des Ringes Kraft. The first means bewirken, the second, gebrauchen.

Notice the following: die Schwertstuecke zerspinnen, S. 18; ein Werk aus Erz weben, R. 45; den Zuernenden an mir hir zoegern, W. 69. Ettmueller has a few of these phrases: Siegmunds Schiffe schritten, p. 44; zaehe Zahren, etc. Here, as with Wagner, the influence of alliteration is quite evident.

## (2) *Annomination*

Ettmueller shows a preference for these, taken over literally from old Norse: Rat ist dir geraten, ratet nun Rat, der Tag

tagt, eine Bitte bitt' ich, Schwuere schwurst du, ich hoerte sagen in Sagen der Vorzeit, Kampf war gekaempft, mit Harfe harfte Gunnar, Spiele spielen; Grimm, Edda: Schlaf schlafst du nicht, etc. Wagner: nie sann dies ernstlich mein Sinn, Rache raeche den Fehl, mit keinem Gruss gruesst, Braten briet, Rat mir riet, mit Rate riet, der Gedanke den ich nicht dachte.

### (3) *Play Upon Words*

R. Freia die holde, Holda die Freie; vertragen ist's, sie tragen wir heim; wollen sie frei'n, ein Haus soll sie erfreu'n; Loge heisst du, doch nenn ich dich Luege; versank ich in Sinnen, bis unter den Sitz warst du versunken. Cf. 66, 70, 75.

W. Friedmund darf ich nicht heissen, Frohwalt moecht ich wohl sein; als Waelse woelfisch im Walde du schweiftest; zu Walvater, der dich gewachlt; cf. 44, 70, 76, 82, 85.

S. He Mime, du Memme; nun schwitze noch einmal, dass ich dich schweisse. Cf. 20, 40, 71.

G. Wie heisst deine Schwester—Gutrun—sind's gute Runen; Hagen—der Hagedorn sticht nun nicht mehr; wie den Wurm du faelltest, so faellst auch du.

### (4) *Favorite Forms.*

(a) With zu: zu eins, zu zwei, zu Leib, zu Ross, zu Heer, zu Grund, zu Nutz, zu Recht, zu End', zu Tal, zu Hauf, zu best, zu ganz, etc.

(b) With -ur: urweise, urwissend, Urmuetter, Urmuetter Weisheit, Urmuetter Furcht, Ursorge, Urgestz, etc.

(c) Substantives in Ge-: Geduenst, Gedueft, Gedaempft, Ge-neck, Gewoelk, Gestimm, Gekeif, Geraun, Gestemm, Gefrage, Gewirk, Geaest, Geheiss, Gewell, Gewog.

(d) Substantives in -er: Bauer (Erbauer, one who builds), Haeufer, Zager, Angstversehrter, Gieriger, Verbieter, etc.

(e) Compound Substantives: Gaunergezuecht, Nickergezuecht, Wassergezuecht, Riesengezuecht, Goettergelichter, Gewitterbrunst, Glimmerschein, Minnetraum, Widdergespann, Goetergesetz, Alrauner, Nachthueter, Wonneentzuecken, Wunschmaedchen, Wotanskind, Schildmaid, Looskieserin, Heldenreizerin, Ohnmachtsschmerz, Hoffnungssehnen, Weltenwonne, Fratzen-schmied, Nabelnest, Wurmsgeschlecht, Zwergenzwecke, Zwergen-

frohne, Wogengewoelk. Lustfreie. Leidbelastete, Niederboste, Mannesgemahl, etc.

(f) *Invectives*: schaebiger Knecht, Lungerer, frevelnder Gauch, Geck, Garstige, Kauz, schleckes Geschluepfer, glitscheriger Glimmer, kalter, graetiger Fisch, Wicht, Hund, feiger Wicht, garstiger Gauch, raeudiger Kerl, Memme, verfluchte Klemme, Toelpel, Ruepel, haariger hoeckriger Geck, schwieliges Schwefelgezeug, schmaehlich schlaues luederlich schlechtes Gelichter, fauler Schuft.

(g) *Metaphor and personification of the brute and inanimate world.*

In her denunciation of Wotan for engendering the Waelung, Fricka calls the twin couple merely a brood, a litter—dem *Wurfe der Woelfin* wirfst du zu Fuessen dein Weib, W. 31.

Siegmund has been fascinated by the lustre of Sieglind's eyes; night falls quickly, he is left alone with a threat from Hunding for to-morrow's combat; entire darkness now envelops him and within him is the gloom of dire apprehension, when, suddenly, a gleam of light breaks through the tree where Nothung is securely thrust: *welch ein Strahl bricht aus der Esche Stamm? Ist es der Blick der bluehenden Frau . . .*, W. 16.

Spring breaks in upon the loving couple: *der Lenz lacht, sein Atem weht, weit geoeffnet lacht sein Auge, aus sel'ger Voeglein Sange suess er toent, holde Luefte haucht er aus, aus seinem warmen Blue entbluehen wonnige Blumen, mit zarter Waffen Zier bezwingt er die Welt*, W. 20.

Fricka's Widder *aechzen* vor Angst, *wild* rasseln die Raeder.

Sieglinde suddenly becomes aware of her tragic guilt, she despises not only her lover, she abhors herself with extreme repugnance. When Siegmund enfolds her to his bosom, she cries: *flieh die Leiche*. Cf. Fouqué, p. 241; Gunnar embracing Brynhild: *fort, bin Leiche schon*.

Hunding comes with his dogs for the appointed combat; in the yelps of dumb beasts Sieglind hears an accusation of her guilt crying to heaven: *mutig gehetzt heult die Meute, wild bellt sie zum Himmel um der Ehe gebrochenen Eid—Rueden fletschen die Zaehne nach Fleisch, sie achten nicht deines edlen Bluts*, W. 48.

Ortlinde's mare is being pushed by the stallion, Gerbild believes that the hatred of the heroes creates mischief even among the

horses: der Recken Zwist entzweit noch die Rosse der Helden Grimm *buesste* schon die Graue, W. 64. Cf. Wilkina, chap. 41, where Falke fights for his master, breaking Ecke's back; in chap. 43, Falke repeats this feat as his master is waging a losing combat with an elephant. Fouqué also makes use of this, p. 197.

When Wotan comes, enraged by Bruennhild's attitude, to mete out to her the fullest measure of his wrath, even the elements of nature are in sympathy with his mission: Gewittersturm naht vom Norden, starkes Gewoelk staut sich auf, Heervater reitet sein heilig Ross, W. 65.

The repose of the Rheingold is described as: des Goldes *Schlaf*, der Rhein ist des *Schlummernden* Bett, die Weckerin Gruesst den Wonnigen *Schlaefer* (meaning the gold) jetzt *kuesst* sie sein *Auge*, dieses *laechelt*. Das Rheingold selbst ist: leuchtende Lust, gluehender Glanz, der Freund, der Wassertiefe wonniger Stern, der klare Hort. Fuer Loge ist es: ein Tand; fuer Alberich, nachdem er es hat: zwingende Kraft, nachdem er es verloren hat: verfluchtes Gold; fuer Siegfried: ein wertloses Ding; fuer Bruennhilde: verfluchter Reif, furchtbarer Ring.

The sword Nothung is called upon as a witness to Siegmund's integrity, he (for here the sword is masculine) is admonished: zeig deiner Schaerfe schneidenden *Zahn*, Nothnug *zernagt* das Herz, W. 47. Again he is admonished, this time to take life: zwei Leben *lachen* in dir, nimm sie, Nothung; Hunding is to *taste* its sharp edge, seine Schneide schmecke jetzt du. When Siegfried has welded the pieces of the broken sword he throws it, still glowing, into the water to temper it: in das Wasser floss sein Feuerfluss, grimmiger *Zorn* zischt ihm da auf. He speaks to the sword as one would to an unrelenting friend; einst faerbte Blut dein falbes Blau—kalt *lachtet* du da, das Warme *lecktest* du kuehl—*zornig* spruehst du mir Funken, weil ich dich Sproeden *gezachmt*, *lustig lachst* du mich an—nun schwinde deine rote *Scham*—werde kalt und hart *wie du kannst*—tot lagst du, jetzt leuchtest du *troztig* und *hchr*.

Of the fire around Bruennhild's monutain is said (die Lohe) es *leck'* ihre *Zung'*, es *fresse* ihr *Zahn* den Zagen—wer die Braut begehrt, dem brennt entgegen die Brunst—as though the fire knew that he who longs for the sleeping maiden is near. Then follows a crescendo which reminds one of the fire scene in Schiller's

“Bell:” es waechst der Schein, es schwillt die Glut, sengende Wolken, wabernde Lohe waelzen sich brennend und prasselnd herab; ein Lichtmeer umleuchtet dein Haupt, bald *frisst* und *zehrt* dich zuendendes Feuer—zurueck denn, rasendes Kind! S. 85. Again, the fire is made the intelligent guard at Siegfried’s second approach, G. 36, beginning with the soft evening gleam, and growing into surging, fearful billows of flame: abendlich Daemmern deckt den Himmel, heller leuchtet die huetende Lohe—was leckt so wuetend die lodernde Welle zum Wall—zur Feuerspitze wealzt sich der feurige Schwall. Again, the fire is made a moral agent, this time influencing Siegfried. His whole frame is thrilled by the first startling emotions of human love: ein zehrendes Feuer ist mir entzuended—with exquisite innocence he explains this heretofore unknown rapture due to the fire: die Glut, die Bruennhilds Felsen umbrann, die brennt mir nun in der Brust.

Hagen speaks as though the blood in his veins were aware of its ignoble extraction, for that reason it is *storrish*, nicht *will’s* die Wange mir roeten, G. 27.

When Gunther sails down the Rhine with Siegfried to gain possession of Bruennhild, even the wind is propitious: Gibichs Sohn wehet der Wind, G. 28.

Wotan’s ravens feel the speedy and irresistible approach of disaster. Would that they returned with good news, he would have reason to hope once more—but they do not return.



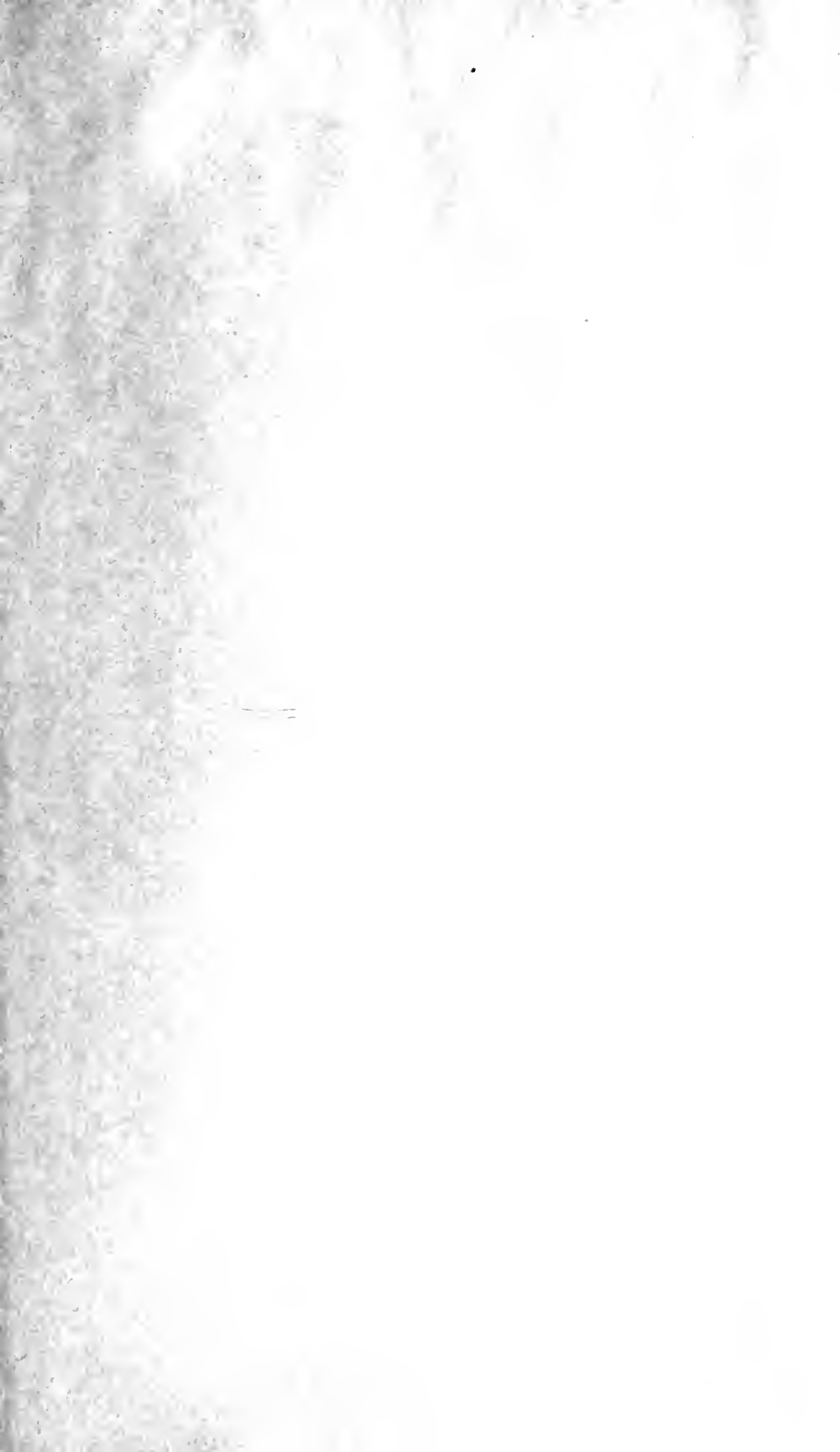




8156 10







UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

MAY 7 1963  
 APR 7 1965  
 MAY 18 1966  
 JUN 13 1966  
 MAR 22 1969  
 REC'D MUS-LIB  
 JUN 8 1973  
 JUN 6 1973  
 REC'D MUS-LIB  
 JAN 31 1977

QUARTER LOAN  
 NOV 5 1979  
 JAN 7 1980  
 OCT 29 1979  
 REC'D MUS-LIB  
 QUARTER LOAN  
 NOV 1 1980  
 JAN 12 1981  
 APR 11 1983  
 REC'D MUS-LIB  
 APR 4 1983  
 JUN 4 1985  
 REC'D MUS-LIB  
 MAY 31 1985  
 JUN 5 1985

Semi-Ann. Loan  
 FEB 13 1989  
 MAY 1 1989  
 REC'D MUS-LIB  
 FEB 1 1989  
 MAR 22 1991  
 REC'D MUS-LIB  
 MAR 3 1991  
 SEMI-ANN. LOAN  
 JAN 6 1992  
 MAY 4 1992  
 REC'D MUS-LIB  
 FEB 8 1992  
 JUL 1 1993  
 JUN 16 1993  
 REC'D C.L. JUN 07 '95

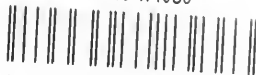
Form L9-17m-8,55 (B3339s4)441

THE LIBRARY  
 UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
 LOS ANGELES

Music  
Library

ML  
L10  
W1983  
Sakuler  
The language  
of Richard  
Wagner's Ring  
des Nibelungen.

Music Library  
ML 410 W1983



L 007 014 901 8

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FA



AA 000 530 421 7

Music  
Library

ML  
L10  
W1983

UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES  
LIBRARY

